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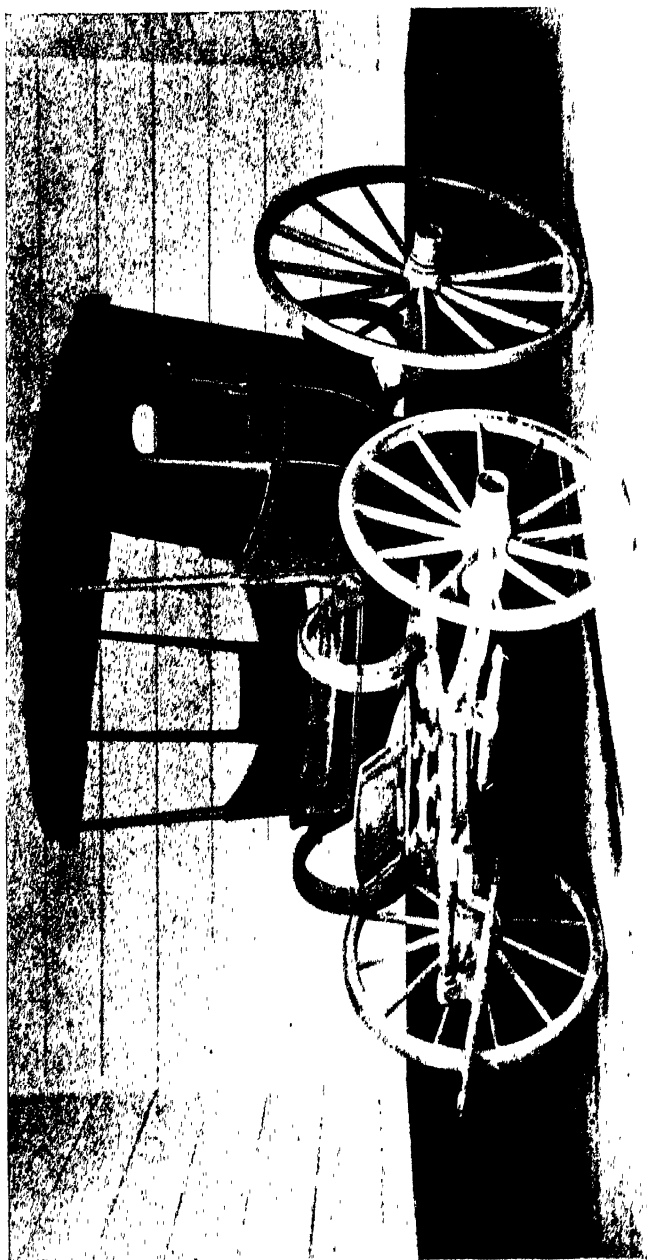












COACHES, BELIEVED TO BE THE WASHINGTON FAMILY CARRIAGE; IN COACH-HOUSE  
AT MOUNT VERNON FROM 1804 TO 1801.

# WASHINGTON COACHEE

AND OF

## THE POWEL COACH

WHICH IS NOW AT

MOUNT VERNON

---

WRITTEN AND COMPILED

BY

MRS. MARY STEVENS BEALL

Secretary to the Columbia Historical Society

For ROBERT L. BROWNFIELD, of Uniontown, Pa.

This Coachee has been exhibited in the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C. since Nineteen thirty-one (1931). The Powel Coach is now at Mount Vernon Virginia. July, Nineteen Forty-Nine (1949).

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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BY  
ROBERT L. BROWNFIELD

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## A Foreword.

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A word of explanation seems necessary before presenting the story of the Washington coachee and the Powel coach, with the Documentary History relating to them. Searching for proof of the authenticity of the coachee, evidence cropped up on every hand of the Powel origin of the coach that superseded the coachee in the restored coach-house at Mount Vernon. If fire and the indifference of former owners have destroyed documentary evidence of the Washington origin of the coachee, the unique position must be accorded it of being the only vehicle in existence whose claim to having originally belonged to Washington can not be disputed except as a matter of opinion, and against whose claim no *proof* has ever been advanced.

When diligent search had failed to discover any testimony *against* the Washington origin of the coachee and much circumstantial evidence to substantiate its claim; and when an unbroken chronology had been established for the coach from its importation in 1789 for Mrs. Samuel Powel, down to the present time, Mr. R. L. Brownfield of Uniontown, Pa., asked permission to lay the facts before the Regent and Vice-Regents of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. This privilege was accorded, and May 23, 1907, was appointed as the day.

The Mount Vernon Association was represented by Mrs. Elizabeth B. A. Rathbone, Vice-Regent for Michigan, and Mrs. Henry W. Rogers, Vice-Regent for Maryland. Mr. Brownfield was represented by his son Mr. R. L. Brownfield, Jr., by Mr. Hugh T. Taggart, former United States Attorney, and by Mrs Mary Stevens Beall,

Secretary to the Columbia Historical Society. Mrs. Beall briefly stated the facts in the case which, after discussion, it was agreed should be submitted to Professor J. Franklin Jameson, Director Department of Historical Research, Carnegie Institution, Washington, D. C., and authority was given to Mr. Harrison H. Dodge, Resident Secretary and Superintendent at Mount Vernon, to let Professor Jameson have access to such papers as the Association had, bearing upon the coach, either in seeing the originals or in having copies of the same.

For the sake of historical accuracy, Professor Jameson consented to perform this task; the material was placed in his hands December 10, 1907, and his opinion was rendered February 19, 1908.



## The Washington Family-Carriage, the Genuine and the Spurious.

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When the restoration of the negro-quarters, outbuildings, etc., at Mount Vernon was determined upon, certain of the Vice-Regents pledged their States to carry out designated parts of the plan. Thus Michigan assumed the "restoration of the old coach-house," and in 1894 the Vice-Regent for that State reported its completion at a cost of two hundred and seventy dollars.

In 1895 the same Vice-Regent reports:

"Very soon after the adjournment of the Council last year, the earnest search for the 'lost coach' was rewarded through the zealous interest of Mr. Brownfield of Philadelphia, who not only left no step untaken to recover the Washington coach, but generously presented it to the Association."

Mr. Brownfield's efforts in this matter were the result of a personal appeal to him. The Mount Vernon Association having been informed that a Washington carriage had been sold at Thomas' auction rooms in Philadelphia, about 1892, to a circus company, Mr. Harrison H. Dodge, Resident Secretary and Superintendent at Mount Vernon, wrote to the Commissioners of Pennsylvania to the World's Fair, to ascertain if they knew where the coach was, and if an offer of purchase would be entertained, he having heard the Commissioners had tried to buy it.

This letter was turned over by Mr. A. B. Farquhar, one of the Commissioners, to Mr. Brownfield, then of Phila-

delphia, now of Uniontown, Pa., with the comment, May 28, 1894: "You are one of the Commissioners; you live in Philadelphia; \* \* \* and possibly you could help out Mr. Dodge." Mr. Brownfield began the search at once and exactly one month later was able to write to Mr. Dodge, June 28, 1894:

"I have the pleasure of informing you that I have found General Washington's coach, bought, paid for it, and will now ask the Mount Vernon Ladies Association to do me the honor of accepting it as a present from me."

Mr. Dodge replied by telegraph:

"Congratulations; expect me Saturday at noon."

Mr. Farquhar wrote, June 29, 1894:

"Thanks for yours of June 28th but I had already been apprised by the papers of the successful termination of your search for the coach. \* \* \* I offer my thanks and congratulations for restoring this intimate connection with the Father of our Country."

Mrs. Mary G. Forepaugh, answering a letter of inquiry from Mr. Brownfield, had written, June 2, 1894:

"I would gladly return the coach to the Ladies of Virginia—if I still owned it—but the circus, with all its paraphernalia, was sold after Mr. Forepaugh's death."

The purchasers were the Barnum and Bailey Circus Company.

The *Philadelphia Daily Evening Telegraph* of June 28, 1894, devoted nearly a column to the subject of the securing for Mount Vernon of so interesting a relic as "George Washington's family carriage."

Mr. Dodge's letter of July 4, 1894, gives the next stage in the progress of affairs and is quoted entire:

“ MY DEAR MR. BROWNFIELD:

“ You will doubtless be pleased to learn that the coach is safely placed in the coach-house at Mount Vernon, where it is exhibited to-day for the first time and attracts the interest and attention of many people.

“ It reached Washington Monday in good condition—I oversaw the unloading from the car and when the wheels were adjusted I enveloped the relic in a cotton carriage cover, then had the old coach (thus masqueraded) dragged by one strong man down to the steamboat, I keeping it close company you may be sure.

“ When it reached our wharf and was being unloaded, the passengers then for the first time discovered this important addition to the attractions and made a great fuss over it.

“ I can not help wondering what the good people of Philadelphia are saying to-day about the absence of the Washington coach from their grand parade. Some of the M. V. Ladies to whom I announced your kind donation, have hastened to mention their gratification at the ‘ find.’

“ Please be assured of the keen appreciation of your gift by all concerned. When you can pay the promised visit to Mount Vernon, I shall be glad indeed to meet and entertain you.”

On the 6th of July, same year, Mr. Farquhar wrote again to Mr. Brownfield:

“ I have a very pretty letter from Mr. Dodge this morning thanking me for my interest in the coach. I quote literally: ‘ We never dreamed that it was his [Mr. Brownfield’s] intention to donate the coach if found, but this he has done, and now the old equipage rests from its travels and attracts the attention of the many visitors here; I think I wrote you that the coach-house has been recently restored.’ ”

Here is the text of one of the personal letters referred to by Mr. Dodge:

"ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN,  
 "July 14, 1894.

"MR. ROBERT L. BROWNFIELD, Philadelphia,

"DEAR SIR: I would like to add my personal acknowledgments to the official recognition which your generous gift of the 'old coach' has doubtless received from the Secretary of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. I made efforts last summer to find one of Washington's coaches to restore to the coach-house, which as Vice-Regent for Michigan I had undertaken to rebuild—but with no result until, upon the completion of the coach-house this spring, Mr. Dodge came to my aid and through him your generous co-operation was secured. The success has been most gratifying and I can not thank you enough for your patriotic interest, zeal and generosity. I hope you will visit Mount Vernon during the session of the Annual Council, which takes place next year—or rather opens—on the third Thursday of May, that we may have the pleasure of showing you 'The Coach' in its old quarters and other interesting features of Washington's Old Home.

"Very gratefully yours,

"ELIZABETH B. A. RATHBONE,

"*Vice-Regent for Michigan,*

"*M. V. L. Association.*"

An article headed "Washington's Coach" printed in the *Sunday Inter-Ocean*, Chicago, July 29, 1894, from the *Detroit Free Press*, ends with this statement:

"The regents of the Association will henceforth accord great honor to Mr. Brownfield's courtesy, \* \* \* and will do everything in their power to attest their gratitude and appreciation."

On April 24, 1895, Mr. Dodge wrote:

"I regret so much that your long-promised visit to Mount Vernon is still unpaid. The approaching meeting of the Ladies Asso. (May 16) would be an excellent occasion for you to avail yourself of to come and personally receive their thanks for your gift of the coach."

The above extracts from letters and newspapers are quoted for the purpose of showing that Mr. Brownfield was asked to find a certain old coach of which the ladies of the Mount Vernon Association had already heard; and also their reception of the gift. His connection with George Washington's old family carriage was the result of a direct request and was wholly in the interest of the Association, and to aid in collecting the belongings of Washington and in restoring them to his home at Mount Vernon. There was no thought of personal aggrandizement and no advantage, monetary or otherwise, has accrued to him through this connection.

Shortly after April, 1895, Mr. Brownfield moved to Uniontown, Pa., and never availed himself of the oft-repeated invitations to become the guest of the Regent and Vice-Regents at Mount Vernon. His gift, however, was shown with pride and continued to occupy its place of honor in the coach-house until 1901, when a vehicle that had been exhibited at the Centennial Exposition of 1876 as "General Washington's White Chariot" was purchased by the Vice-Regent for Michigan with funds contributed by the Mount Vernon Society of Detroit, and this was installed in the place of the Washington family carriage or coachee, and that once highly prized relic was banished to the stable.

## History of the Washington Coachee.

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Until the United States began preparations for the celebration of her first Revolutionary Centennial little regard had been paid to old things. Colonial furnishings that to-day would be accorded an honorable place in a museum, or treasured by the inheritor as a priceless heirloom, were thrown aside in the early part of the nineteenth century as past their day of usefulness. Washington's three coaches, all cream-color, all emblazoned with his coat of arms and enriched with decorated panels and gilding, are known to have passed out of existence early in the last century—one being shot to pieces at the battle of New Orleans; one taken to pieces by Bishop Meade, of which there is credible evidence; and a third taken to pieces by Henry Dunlap, Sr.; but a less pretentious vehicle, in a good state of preservation, exists at the present day—this is his *coachee*, referred to again and again in his diary as the family carriage; and sold from Mount Vernon after the death of Mrs. Washington.

Isaac Weld, the traveler, who visited the United States during the last decade of the eighteenth century, 1795–1797, gives the following description:\*

“The carriages made use of in Philadelphia consist of coaches, chariots, coachees and light wagons, the greater part of which are built in Philadelphia. \* \* \* The coachee is a carriage peculiar, I believe, to America. The body of it is rather longer than that of a coach, but of the

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\* “History of Philadelphia, 1809–1884,” by J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott. Vol. 1, p. 912.

same shape. In the front it is left quite open down to the bottom and the driver sits on a bench under the roof of the carriage. There are two seats in it for passengers, who sit in it with their faces to the horses. The roof is supported by small props, which are placed at the corners. On each side of the door, above the panels, it is quite open; and, to guard against bad weather, there are curtains which are made to let down from the roof, and fasten to buttons on the outside. There is also a leathern curtain, to hang occasionally between the driver and passengers. The only difference between the small wagon and the coachee is that the latter is better furnished, has varnished panels and doors at the side."

Washington's coachee differs in but one particular, its door is in the rear, the back seat being divided in the middle and folding back, on hinges, against the sides. The upholstery is of thick but pliable leather that looks good enough for another century's wear. The body of the coachee is suspended by stout leathern straps, to wooden C springs, which John Philipson in his "The Art and Craft of Coach Building," London, 1897, declares to be "practically the oldest method of suspending carriages on springs."

The Washington coachee could be driven with two horses, the coachman occupying the front seat; or, if the roads were muddy or the occupants of the vehicle wished to talk unreservedly without the restraining presence of a servant, an additional pair of horses could be attached and the four guided by two postillions, leaving the driver's seat to accommodate two more occupants. There is no trace of gilding or emblazonry on this carriage, but as it was intended for everyday use and not for state occasions, we are neither surprised nor disappointed at its plain, unostentatious appearance. There are evidences here and there of some slight repairs and a whip-socket is unmistakably a later addition. The

wheels are more *dished* than are those of the present day and the hubs are of wood. The body is painted a warm shade of claret that contrasts well with the tan color of the lining and cushions.

Washington Irving in his "Life of Washington," Vol. V, p. 19, describing the carriages of the first President, says:

"Besides this modest equipage [the post chaise] there was the ample family carriage which had been brought from Virginia. To this, four horses were put when the family drove out into the country, the state of the roads in those days requiring it. For the same reason six horses were put to the same vehicle on journeys, and once on a state occasion."

Once, when Washington had been ill, his family carriage was the chosen vehicle in which he took the air, for on May 29, 1790, the *Pennsylvania Packet* announces:

"The President of the United States is so far recovered that he rode out in his carriage on Monday last." (May 24.)

For the most part, however, after the purchase of his English coach, the family carriage seems to have been relegated to the background during the presidency. But when the family returned to Mount Vernon it was once more Mrs. Washington's chosen vehicle. Mrs. William Thornton, wife of the architect of the Capitol, while visiting Mrs. Washington in 1800, records in her diary:

"Aug. 4th — After breakfast Mrs. Lewis, the young ladies [Miss Henley and Miss Dandridge] and I went in Mrs. Washington's carriage (a coachee and four) and Mr. Lewis & Dr. T[hornton] in ours, to see Mr. Lewis' Hill — where he is going to build, and his farm, & Mill and distillery."



In other records of the period we find references to Mrs. Washington's carriage and we know it was not parted with until after her death in May, 1802, for in the advertisement of the auction sale at Mount Vernon to be held July 20, 1802, the executors of George Washington offer this "Coachee, with Harness compleat for four horses." A grand-niece of General Washington writes: "I think there is a list of articles sold at that sale and the purchasers." The statement is correct for the original records of this sale are in the manuscript collection of W. F. Havemeyer, of New York, who purchased them from one of the Washington heirs. Mr. Lawrence Washington of the Library of Congress is authority for stating that these lists contained the names of all the purchasers, the articles purchased and the amount paid for each.

Being so well and strongly built, the coachee was purchased at the auction and even at subsequent sales for use, with no thought of considering it as a relic. Still, the illustriousness of its first possessor always invested it with an interest not attached to ordinary vehicles; and as it passed from one to another, the story of its being the family carriage of George Washington was always handed on with it, well-authenticated, and as much a part of the old coachee as its antiquated wooden springs, or its unique rear door. At last, however, the very characteristics that, to-day, contribute to its interest as a relic, rendered it undesirable for daily use and it gradually ceased to be seen on the country roads.

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On December 24, 1907, there died in the city of Washington a venerable lady, Mrs. Ann (George) Reese, whose life had nearly spanned a century, as she was born December 4, 1809. She had a remarkable memory. "Although she was only three years of age when the war of 1812 began, she could remember the soldiers of the

United States marching away, their wives and sweethearts trailing after them. She was present at the great reception given in Baltimore in 1824 to the Marquis de Lafayette and stood on a housetop waving a handkerchief and cheering the great Frenchman." She remembered every President from John Adams to Theodore Roosevelt, and could distinctly recall the double funeral of Adams and Jefferson in 1826.

She had a brother older than herself, also now deceased, John Simpers George, who prior and subsequent to 1829 owned and lived upon a farm on the Reistertown Road, Baltimore County, Maryland. This Mr. George, who married Miss Mary Whittington, was one of the early purchasers of the Washington coach. His sister Ann spent much of her time on the farm, and in warm weather was in the habit of sitting in the old carriage with her sewing, her knitting or a book. Marrying on December 17, 1829, and going away to her new home, she does not remember to have seen this carriage again, but she has often spoken in the intervening years of her brother's having once owned the Washington family carriage. She was almost blind before her death, but several years ago, before her sight began to fail, and when she was living at 3027 O Street, Georgetown, D. C., she unhesitatingly identified a photograph of the coach as a correct representation of the Washington carriage her brother used to own.

The above facts were given by Mrs. Reese to Miss Cordelia Jackson of 3010 O street, Georgetown, D. C., daughter of Richard Jackson, author of "Chronicles of Georgetown," as items of interest that Mrs. Reese delighted to recall.

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Living in Pennsylvania during the latter half of the nineteenth century was a showman and collector of curiosities named Roman Ketterer. Though a German by

birth, he was a patriotic American by adoption, and, like many another showman, he cherished the project of perpetuating his memory by founding a great American Revolutionary Museum. Year by year he rigidly put by a certain percentage of his income to purchase relics pertaining to the War for Independence and to the early days of the new Republic. At first he was content to acquire simply old-time belongings; but growing richer in both money and experience, he began to search for articles having the added value of association. One of his purchases was a colonial carriage from the Heston family because of a tradition that Washington had once ridden in it. Dr. George T. Heston of Newtown, Pa., supplied the following description of this coach bought by Ketterer at the executor's sale of Isaac Heston's possessions. It was of unknown origin but recorded about 1750; it had two seats running its entire length, windows of glass, a rear door and a broad step at the back on which two servants stood when the coach was in use. The Doctor added that there was another Heston coach, with memories going back to 1710, owned by the Doctor's fourth grandfather, Zebulon Heston, who came to this country from England about the year 1680, bringing the coach, a gift from the Wharton family, with him. That was really the coach of the traditional ride, when Colonel Edward Heston is said to have driven General Washington about the country on a reconnoitering trip before the battle of Trenton. But that venerable carriage dropped to pieces in an old coach-house on the Heston estate, many years before Ketterer purchased the second one.

Ketterer had succeeded in collecting many quaint, curious, and valuable things when the opportunity for which he had waited so long, came. He heard that the Washington family carriage was being offered for sale by a man named Webster. According to his wife, Ketterer had to

dispose of quite a number of his curios to raise the money for the journey and to buy the coach; but he did it cheerfully, as the height of his ambition had always been to possess something once owned by the great Washington. When, at last, he was the carriage's proud possessor, with the story of its owners since 1802, he caused his name to be branded on one of the steps at the back of the coachee — a piece of vanity, if you choose, but invaluable to-day as a certain means of identification. The estimation in which he held this prize may be gathered from the fact that thereafter it always headed the list of exhibits on his handbills, and that shortly before his death he refused an offer of \$11,000 for his entire collection, as he valued the Washington carriage, alone, at \$5,000.

Needless to say, Ketterer's dream of founding a museum was never realized. After his death in 1891, his collection was sold at auction in Somerton, Pa., where he had lived, and his executor, Martin Van Buren Vanartsdalen of Feasterville, Pa., attaching no value to his box of letters, receipts, broadsides, pamphlets, memoranda and newspaper clippings, claims to have destroyed them after he settled up the estate. Ketterer's widow, Bridget Ketterer, living with their widowed daughter, Mrs. Paul Worthington, at Oxford, Pa., in September of 1903, stated that the box of papers given up to the executor contained, among other things, data for a complete history of the coachee, which Roman Ketterer had always planned to have written, and printed in pamphlet form. The widow and the daughter gave practically the same facts, although interviewed separately. They said Roman owned several carriages, which he sold one after another as he heard of one more interesting historically that was being offered for sale. Neither thought the papers had been destroyed, as Ketterer had always said that they were "worth money in themselves."

J. J. Ketterer of Somerton, Pa., harnessmaker, identified a photograph of the coachee as a picture of the "Washington Coach" to which he had once done some slight repairing for Roman Ketterer. Alonso Terry, a blacksmith of Trevese, Pa., branded Ketterer's name on the step of the "Washington Coach."

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Krusen of Pittsville, Pa., knew Roman Ketterer well. They said the sale of his "Museum" was not properly advertised; had it been put in a Philadelphia paper the things would have brought better prices. As it was, two showmen came up to Somerton from that city the day after the sale, having just heard of it, both anxious to purchase the "Washington Carriage." Mr. and Mrs. Krusen both spoke of Roman Ketterer's name being branded on one of the steps, and of his having had satisfactory proof of its Washington origin.

The coachee and a number of other exhibits were bought by Augustus Egolf of Norristown, Pa., "dealer in old-fashioned clocks, antique furniture, andirons, spinning-wheels, etc." Egolf said when Ketterer traveled about the country or exhibited at fairs, he had a gaily-decorated tent hung around with sleigh-bells. It was thus he exhibited the Washington coachee at Norristown in 1884 and several years later at the Montgomery County, Pa., Centennial.

Early in 1892, Egolf sent the coachee to M. Thomas & Sons, auctioneers, 1525 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. While awaiting a purchaser it was borrowed by a Democratic Association to be used in one of their torchlight parades. Mr. Krusen also spoke of the parade and said he rode in the coach. After its return to the auction rooms it was sold to the *Adam Forepaugh Shows* in May of 1892 to be used in their production of the American Revolution. Owing to the death of Mr. Forepaugh, this intention was never carried out and the George Wash-

ington coachee was placed in storage at Lehigh Avenue and Edgemont Street, Philadelphia.

This was the carriage that Mr. Dodge had heard of, concerning which he wrote to the Pennsylvania Commissioners to the World's Columbian Exposition, and which Mr. Brownfield was asked to discover if possible; and this specific request for a circumstantially designated vehicle was the reason for Mr. Brownfield's action in the matter.

When the present Mount Vernon coach was substituted for the coachee and the latter stored away in the stable, Mr. Brownfield's good faith was called in question and he was twitted with having "imposed a clever fake" upon the Mount Vernon Ladies Association; and because of their lack of belief in his gift and the rumors set afloat concerning himself, he addressed a letter to the Association asking permission to remove the coachee from Mount Vernon, as he would not knowingly be a party to a fraud. To this request he received the following reply:

" MOUNT VERNON ON THE POTOMAC,  
" FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA,  
" May 19, 1903.

" Mr. BROWNFIELD,

" DEAR SIR: Your letter concerning the interesting old carriage you very generously presented to the Mount Vernon Association, several years ago, has been read before Council, and I have been directed to write to you on the subject.

" While regretting the loss of this unique old colonial vehicle, the Council feels that it must comply with your wishes, which are based upon a high sense of truth and integrity.

" With an appreciation of your interest in Mount Vernon, and your generosity to the Association, I have the honor to be,

" Yours truly,

" ELIZABETH B. A. RATHBONE,  
" Vice-Regent for Michigan."

Mr. Joseph T. McCaddon, former manager and lessee of the Forepaugh Circus, when search was being made to prove the genuineness of the coachee, wrote from Buffalo to Mr. Brownfield, under date of August 17, 1903:

“The papers you refer to regarding the Washington Carriage are filed away with a mass of old business correspondence at our winter quarters, Bridgeport, Conn., and it would be impossible to get access to them until next winter.”

Soon after this a disastrous fire broke out at the winter quarters referred to, not the smallest loss by which was the business papers, etc., of the circus for many years; among them the documents relating to the coachee.

While awaiting the gathering up of the data contained in this sketch, and having his belief in the authenticity of the coachee, Mr. Brownfield removed it from its seclusion in the Mount Vernon stable to a storehouse in Washington, on Wednesday, December 27, 1905.

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## True History of the Coach Now at Mount Vernon.

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The persistency with which false history clings to any object for which it has once been manufactured, is nowhere better exemplified than in the story of the coach now exhibited in the restored coach-house at Mount Vernon.

In 1860 the Prince of Wales, now King of England, made a tour of the United States and Canada, reaching Philadelphia at four o'clock on the afternoon of October 9. On the morning of the 10th he visited Girard College and Fairmount Park, and in the afternoon attended the races at Point Breeze Park. The *Public Ledger* for October 11, 1860, after describing the races, the visitors, etc., says:

“The old family carriage of Gen. Geo. Washington was drawn around the grounds by six gray horses. It attracted much attention.”

The Philadelphia *Press* of the same date goes more into detail. It says:

“On the ground inside the race course, a prominent object was the old carriage *said* to belong to General Washington, which was drawn by six fine gray horses, decorated with red, white and blue plumes. Mr. Frederick Shower, one of the party having the carriage in charge, extended an invitation to the Prince to take a ride in it around the course, but the invitation was politely declined. After the race was over, the old carriage, with four gentlemen inside, was driven past in



front of the Prince, when the party inside took off their hats. The Prince looked at the carriage as it passed, but made no acknowledgment."

A niece of William Dunlap, carriage-builder, the then owner of the carriage, is still living in Philadelphia. At the time of the Prince's visit she was a girl of twelve, and distinctly remembers standing on the carriage factory steps to see the old coach brought out on this occasion. She positively asserts, however, that it never belonged to Washington but was built for the Powels and that her family have always so stated. Her grandfather, Henry Dunlap, Sr., did own a Washington carriage, at one time, but it fell to pieces through old age. This fact and the resemblance of the Powel to the Washington coach are the reasons she assigns for the persistence other people have shown in calling the Powel, the Washington coach. It is to be noticed that the *Press* item quoted above conservatively refers to the coach as "said" to belong to General Washington.

The same year, 1860, John Jay Smith, in a work entitled "American Historical and Literary Curiosities," gives a picture of "General Washington's Coach" with this note:

"A controversy exists whether this picture was taken from the identical carriage; but all agree in stating that, if not the genuine vehicle, it is a fac-simile—two coaches having been imported at the same time and of the same pattern. The one still in existence *in possession of Wm. Dunlap, a coach-builder, Philada.*"

The two carriages referred to were those of General Washington and of Mrs. Elizabeth Willing Powel, wife of Mayor Samuel Powel of Philadelphia. They were ordered at the same time and were built in England by David Clarke, a Scotchman, who came over with them and established himself as a carriage builder on Sixth

Street between Chestnut and Market Streets, Philadelphia. They were identical, except that General Washington's was ornamented with four medallions painted by Cipriani and representing the four seasons, one on each side-panel of the coach, and his arms were emblazoned on the doors. The Powel coach, on the contrary, had plain panels and the Powel arms, of course, were emblazoned on its doors. Each coach had the high driving seat appropriate to state coaches of that period, draped with the voluminous folds of a handsome hammer-cloth, and when, somewhat later, Washington had an extra set of harness made for his coach, he desired Mr. Lear to direct Clarke to make with this harness a postillion's saddle the cloth of which was to match that of the hammer-cloth and be trimmed with the same lace. Each coach had also, beneath the seat and about a foot lower than its floor, a large feed-box capable of containing a bushel or more of oats. The top of this box was its lid, divided in the middle and opening on hinges.

After the death of Mrs. Martha Washington, in 1802, an auction sale was held at Mount Vernon, beginning on July 20th, to dispose of all "household and kitchen furniture." The executors of General Washington availed themselves of this opportunity of disposing of all the stock, farming implements, camp equipage, horses, harness, one elegant chariot and a coachee, with a "variety of other articles too numerous to particularize." This "elegant chariot" was the state coach already described and it was bought at the auction sale by George Washington Parke Custis of Arlington. It afterward became the property of the Right Reverend William Meade, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. The end of this vehicle is graphically given by the Bishop in his "Old Churches, Ministers and Families in Virginia":

“His old English coach, in which himself and Mrs. Washington not only rode in Fairfax County but traveled through the entire length and breadth of the land, was so faithfully executed, that at the conclusion of that long journey, its builder who came over with it, was proud to be told by the General, that not a nail or screw had failed. It so happened, in a way I need not state, that this coach came into my hands about fifteen years after the death of General Washington. In the course of time, from disuse, it being too heavy for these latter days, it began to decay and give away. Becoming an object of desire to those who delight in relics, I caused it to be taken to pieces and distributed among admiring friends of Washington who visited my house, and also among a number of female associations for benevolent and religious objects, which associations, at their fairs and on other occasions, made a large profit by converting the fragments into walking-sticks, picture-frames and snuff-boxes. About two-thirds of one of the wheels thus produced one hundred and forty dollars. There can be no doubt that at its dissolution, it yielded more to the cause of charity than it cost its builder at its first erection. Besides other mementoes of it, I have in my study, in the form of a sofa, the hind seat, on which the General and his lady were wont to sit.”

This entirely disposes of Washington's English-Clarke-built coach of which the Powel coach was a counterpart, ordered, built, and imported at the same time.

Let us now trace the history of the second coach. Mayor Powel of Philadelphia died in 1793 of yellow fever. His widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Willing Powel, having no children, adopted her nephew, John Hare, who at her earnest request added Powel to his patronymic. Their residence was at Powelton, now known as West Philadelphia. Mrs. Powel used her coach daily in going to church and in visiting the neighboring gentry. As she and her coachman grew old together she had the high driving-seat removed some time between 1817 and

1825, and the present low coachman's seat with arms like a chair, lest the faithful old man should jolt off. The alteration was done by George Heyberger of Philadelphia, and his name appears on the springs upon which the seat rests. It is a seat wholly out of keeping with the rest of the carriage and the fashions of the century in which it was built. Furthermore, in lowering the seat, the ancient feed-box has been utilized as a platform upon which to fasten the new seat, thus destroying its usefulness as a feed-box. This, however, did not disturb Mrs. Powel, as she no longer used her carriage for long journeys but only for church going and in visiting, consequently there was no need of carrying bushels of oats to feed the horses on the way. Mrs. Powel died in 1830, after which time Colonel John Hare Powel, her heir, seldom used the coach, but kept it in the old coach-house at Powelton for about a quarter of a century. During this time he was fairly persecuted by visitors insisting that it was General Washington's coach. This he always denied, pointing out the absence of painted medallions and the presence of the Powel coat of arms. Early in the fifties the barn at Powelton was burned by incendiaries. Some time after, the Powels moved from Powelton and Colonel Powel stored the old coach with Wm. Dunlap, a coach builder of Philadelphia, to get it out of the way, not to exhibit it. Finally, in 1855, Colonel Powel gave the coach to Dunlap, as "a relic of antiquity." As long as Wm. Dunlap lived he steadily denied the story of its having been Washington's, and always gave the Powels as its original and sole owners until the time it came into his possession; though he seems to have loaned it or rented it to circuses, shows, and parades. About 1871 or 1872 John Wanamaker of Philadelphia rented it for part of his exhibit in a grand street parade, and would have purchased it could the

Dunlaps have furnished conclusive proofs of its having once belonged to Washington. On the contrary, when Mr. Wanamaker and his then partner, Mr. J. R. Houghton, looked into the matter, they were convinced that Washington's coach had been taken to pieces by Bishop Meade more than half a century before that date, and that the coach offered by the Dunlaps had originally belonged to the Powels. Numerous other persons intended to buy the coach, but each and all declined upon looking carefully into its history. Proofs of many of these futile attempts to turn it into a Washington coach are held by the Powel family and make interesting reading.

During the early part of the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia the Dunlap-Powel coach occupied a conspicuous position in the Main Building, placarded as "Washington's White Chariot," and a colored man dressed in the white and scarlet livery of the General's household was generally on hand to answer questions and sell photographs of it. At a later period it was moved to the Carriage Annex. Two statements were put in evidence by its then owner, Mr. Wm. Wharton, Jr., 308 Walnut Street, to prove its authenticity.

*First Proof.*

“PHILADELPHIA, PA.,  
“May 27, 1876.

“MR. C. WHARTON,

“SIR: In answer to your question as to what I know of the old carriage now on exhibition at No. 1203 North Forty-first St., in this city. I answer this—Thirty-four years ago, I went to live with Mr. John Hare Powel.

“He put me in charge of the house that contained the carriage in question, and said to me, ‘I want you to take care of that carriage, as it belonged to General Washington, and you may show it to visitors as such.’ He, Mr. Powel, inherited the same from his aunt, Miss Powel,

who had some family connection with the Washington family. I lived in all eight years with Mr. John Hare Powel, and was instructed by him, that both myself and my daughters should show this carriage as having been General Washington's. Many persons came to see it. You may depend upon the truth of this statement. I do not know any person now living who had charge of that carriage except myself, or who knows as much about it as I do.

*"Signed*      ELIZABETH STEEL.

"Sworn and subscribed before me this 27th day of May, A. D. 1876.

CHAS H. LUNGREN,  
"Alderman."

The careful historian notes three palpable misstatements in the above—John Hare Powel's aunt was *Mrs.* not "*Miss*" Powel; the Powels were not connections of the Washingtons; a number of John Hare Powel's descendants were living at the time this statement was sworn to, who would surely know more about the matter than a servant would.

*Second Proof.*

"PHILADELPHIA, PA.,  
"June 12, 1876.

"Mr. WHARTON,

"SIR: It gives me great pleasure to add my testimony, in relation to the carriage sold by me to Mr. Wm. Wharton, Jr.

"I hereby certify that it is the very identical carriage that I received from Mr. John Hare Powel in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-five. It is the same one that occupied the stone building on the Powel estate and is the one spoken of in her affidavit by Mrs. Steel.

*"Signed*      HENRY DUNLAP.

"Witnesses

"C. WHARTON [Brother, now deceased, to Wm. Wharton.]

"E. H. HULTZ." [Secretary, now deceased, to Wm. Wharton.]

As a matter of fact, the coach from Powelton was deposited with and afterward given to *William Dunlap*, the father of Henry. In reality, Mr. Dunlap does not state that the coach in question belonged to Washington or had ever been his property; he simply identifies it as the one that formerly occupied a certain building on the Powel estate, and as the same one sworn to by Mrs. Steel.

Again the Powels were appealed to by intending purchasers and again Mr. Samuel Powel, eldest son of John Hare Powel, stated that it was his great-aunt's coach in which he had often ridden with her when he was a little lad.

One man, however, attached enough importance to these so-called proofs as to decide upon the purchase of the coach, and that was Benjamin Richardson, a well-to-do farmer of West Morrisania, New York. He had already begun to indulge his desire to be known as a collector, by purchasing what he considered curios and relics. That even he was not entirely satisfied as to its former Washington ownership, can be gathered from a postscript to the letter in which he authorizes Mr. S. F. Merrill, Superintendent Main Building Annex, Centennial Grounds, to secure the carriage for him. The letter is dated November 28, 1876, and the postscript reads: "I shall have to examine to see that it was Washington's carriage with your assistance." He bought the Centennial coach for \$650 and thereafter celebrated the 22d of February by riding in it, dressed in an old Continental uniform. Richardson was known as an eccentric and his championship of the coach was looked upon as a harmless fad, until he procured its admission into one of the great Revolutionary commemorative processions in New York, when a vigorous protest was made by historians, and it was not in the great military parade at the celebration of Washington's Inauguration, New York City, April 30, 1889; but

in the Civic and Industrial Parade, next day, it formed part of the exhibit of 1,500 colored men and was mentioned in the official program as "one of George Washington's coaches (or at least a very old coach, similar to the one owned by Washington)."

In 1888 Richardson loaned the coach to the Buckeye Buggy Company of Columbus, Ohio, for their section in the parade celebrating the centennial of the first settlement of that State; but the manager of the company freely stated that they had no proof it had ever belonged to Washington, outside of Mr. Richardson's word, and they simply "took it on faith." Later that same year, Richardson died and bequeathed the coach to his daughter, Sarah Jane, and to his granddaughter, Ella Birdsall, now Mrs. Gouverneur of Brooklyn, New York, and "their heirs and assigns forever." Though litigation began immediately over the real estate Richardson left, his heirs appeared to have cared nothing for the coach and other curiosities. When Sarah Richardson died she bequeathed her interest in the coach and relics to Mrs. Michael Karam and to Miss Selina Birdsall, granddaughters of the late Benjamin Richardson. About 1895 or 1896 Michael Karam bought out the interest of Mrs. Gouverneur, who had acted as her grandfather's secretary and knew the history of each so-called relic, and of Mrs. Selina Birdsall Cooper in the coach and curiosities, paying \$250 for the coach. Four or five years ago, however, the heirs claimed to have received but \$100 for the entire collection including the coach.

The coach was stored in a barn on Mott Street, New York City, until the owner of the property, Mr. Augustus Frey, dealer in real estate, insurance, stocks, bonds, and commercial paper, sold the land, and the coach having to be moved, Frey proposed that he should try and sell it. He offered it to the "Mount Vernon Association"



for the modest sum of \$10,000. After investigating the matter, they declined to make the purchase because, to quote Mr. Frey's own words, "they believe it was the property of a neighbor of General Washington, a Colonel Powel." In June, 1901, however, he succeeded in selling it to the Mount Vernon Society of Detroit, Michigan, for \$350, clearing about one hundred dollars on the transaction as he had advanced Mr. Karam \$250 or \$275 and never made any further accounting. Later that same year, Mr. Frey died. The coach was taken to Hoboken for repairs and thence transported by rail and boat to Mount Vernon to be installed in the restored coach-house, where it has ever since been exhibited advertised by a large sign bearing the legend:

CARRIAGE  
EXHIBITED AT THE  
CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION, PHILADELPHIA,  
1876, AS  
"WASHINGTON'S WHITE CHARIOT."

a discreetness of wording that has aroused the curiosity of more than one visitor.

The history of the negotiations between Frey and the Mount Vernon Society of Detroit is given by the Vice-Regent for Michigan in her annual reports.

1897.

"The Council may remember that two years ago photographs were sent to Mr. Dodge, of Washington's old state coach. Since that time every effort has been made to find the coach, but it has lain 'perdu' until quite recently, when a visitor from Harlem, N. Y., gave Mr. Dodge the address of Mr. Frey, whom he asserted had purchased the coach at the sale of the effects of Captain Benjamin Richardson, a collector of relics, who originally owned it. Mr. Dodge went on to New York and interviewed Mr. Frey and saw the old coach, which he thinks is undoubtedly genuine. Negotiations are pend-

ing for the purchase of the interesting relic, which we fondly hope may be consummated in time for us to welcome the wanderer home before the adjournment of Council."

1898.

"The Vice-Regent reports \$25 received from Mr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, for the Coach fund.

"The State Coach is still a deferred hope. The agent, who denies any personal interest in the matter, has set the price at \$10,000, and the Vice-Regent has for six months let him severely alone. The Vice-Regent makes an appeal to the Vice-Regents of other States to assist her in raising the necessary amount for the purchase of the coach."

1901.

"The Vice-Regent for Michigan reports the final outcome of several years of investigation and search for Washington's state coach. The one exhibited at Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 as Washington's coach was traced to its present owner about three years ago, through the enterprise of our Superintendent, Mr. Dodge. The price asked at the time was \$10,000, which put it beyond our reach. Two years of waiting for a purchaser at that price, or possibly a doubt arising as to the ability to prove its authenticity, had so depressing an effect upon the owner that last summer he made overtures to the Vice-Regent for Michigan and offered the coach for \$2,500. The purchase was then seriously considered by the Regent and several of the Vice-Regents, and it only failed of consummation because a link was missing in the proof of its having belonged to George Washington. Sworn testimony was not wanting to prove that Mr. John Hare Powel, of Philadelphia, who had inherited the coach from his great-aunt, Mrs. Samuel Powel, said the coach in question belonged to George Washington, but the sequel proved that several persons have been guilty of false swearing. Fortunately our wise Regent and sagacious Superintendent advised further investigation before

making the purchase, and we were rewarded by obtaining a communication from Mr. Robert Hare Powel, son of Mr. John Hare Powel. This letter I will read you in full. While Mr. Powel's letter shows conclusively that the coach in question never belonged to George Washington, he also demonstrates that there is no state coach that was Washington's in existence. Mr. Powel also shows that the Powel coach was a twin brother or sister, so to speak, of the famous 'White Chariot,' having been made upon the same model and at the same time, and from the intimacy existing between the Washingtons and the Powels the probability is great that the General occasionally rode in the Powel coach. The Powel coach can now be obtained for \$350, and the Vice-Regent for Michigan only waits for the sanction of the Regent and Vice-Regents to send a check to the owner, which will consummate the purchase."

1902.

"The Michigan State Report is mainly concerned with the consummation of the purchase of the old carriage which was exhibited in 1876 as 'Washington's White Chariot.' The carriage was purchased in 1901 for \$350, and was then put in the hands of a carriage maker in New York for necessary repairs. The expense was met by the Vice-Regent for Michigan with funds contributed by the Detroit Mount Vernon Society."

In a recent interview concerning the present Mount Vernon coach, the Vice-Regent for Michigan revived the claim of its being a Washington carriage, by citing a tradition that had been told to the Association, that at one time during some public function attended by both General Washington and Mrs. Samuel Powel, their carriages were accidentally exchanged, and no one was able, at the present day, to state definitely whether the mistake was ever rectified. As Washington's "White Chariot" was as well known as himself, even without the sure identification of his coat of arms, the searcher after truth can not be expected to consider this anecdote seriously.

Now upon what rests the authority for calling the coach at present exhibited at Mount Vernon, "Washington's White Chariot"? Upon the unsupported affidavit of an illiterate woman, Elizabeth Steel, who claims to have been a servant in the family of Colonel John Hare Powel from 1842 to 1850, but whose sworn statement, in 1876, outside the question of the original owner of the coach, contains three misstatements, easily proved as such. While not denying that she may have been a servant in the dairy, at the farm-house, or about the large dwelling, the Powel family positively assert that no woman was ever employed about the stables or in the coach-house, and describe Elizabeth Steel as being a "talkative old person" whose "memory was probably very defective."

Thus in more than a hundred years one person authoritatively claims the disputed coach as having belonged to Washington; against scores of historians, magazine and newspaper writers, together with the Powel family who, generation after generation, have courteously and patiently testified to its being a Powel coach. One man of all the intending purchasers accepted the Steel statement as satisfactory, and he is known to have been wanting in judgment, eccentric, and illy balanced mentally. Even he did not consider it sufficient, but declared his intention of seeking *proof*.

The coach itself bears none of the identifying marks that history assigns to Washington's coach; there are no painted medallions, no emblazoning on the doors, indeed were they submitted to the searching test of X-rays, the Powel coat of arms, if it has not been sandpapered off, would be found, for that telltale ornamentation was painted off long ago.

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It is respectfully submitted, therefore, that in view of all the facts assembled above, together with the statement

of the Vice-Regent for Michigan in her report for 1901, that the coach offered by Augustus Frey was of Powel and not of Washington origin, that if the Powel coach is to be retained in the Washington coach-house, its ambiguous sign should be superseded by one giving its proper designation as a *Powel* coach, that visitors be no longer misled; while the authenticity of the coachee should in some way be acknowledged, since there is no proof against its claim of having once been a Washington carriage and much circumstantial evidence that the claim is true.

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#### CHRONOLOGY OF THE POWEL COACH.

- About 1798 . . . . . —Imported from England by Mrs. Powel, the wife of Mayor Samuel Powel of Philadelphia.
- 1830 . . . . . —Mrs. Powel died and the carriage became the property of Col. John Hare Powel.
- 1855 . . . . . —Removed from Powelton and stored at the carriage factory of Wm. Dunlap, 476 York Road, Philadelphia.
- Some time prior to 1876 —Sold by Henry Dunlap, son of Wm. Dunlap, to Wm. Wharton, Jr.
- Nov. 28, 1876 . . . . . —Sold by Wm. Wharton, Jr., to Capt. Benjamin Richardson.
- 1888 . . . . . —Capt. Richardson died, and his daughter Sarah Jane and his granddaughter Ella Birdsall, afterward Mrs. Gouverneur, inherited it. When Sarah Jane Richardson died, she bequeathed her interest in the coach to Mrs. Michael Karam and to Selina Birdsall, afterward Mrs. Joseph Cooper.
- About 1895 or 1896 . . . —Michael Karam bought out the interest of Ella Birdsall Gouverneur and of Seline Birdsall Cooper.
- About 1898 . . . . . —Michael Karam entrusted the sale of the coach to Augustus Frey.
- 1901 . . . . . —Augustus Frey sold it to the Mount Vernon Society of Detroit, Michigan, and it was deposited by them at Mount Vernon.
- 1908 . . . . . —Still in coach-house at Mount Vernon.

## Documentary History in the Washington Coach Controversy.

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*"Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in the Olden Time," by John F. Watson, 1842.*

Vol. I, p. 209. "The most splendid looking carriage ever in Philadelphia, at that time was that used by General Washington, while President. There was in it, at least to my young mind, a greater air of stately grandeur than I have ever seen since. It was very large, so much so, as to make four horses an indispensable appendage. It had been previously imported for Governor Richard Penn. It was of a cream color, with much more of gilded carving in the frame than is since used. Its strongest attractions were the relief ornaments on the panels, they being painted medallion pictures of playing cupids, or naked children. That carriage I afterwards saw, in 1804-5, in my store-yard at New Orleans, where it lay an out-cast in the weather!—the result of a bad speculation in a certain Doctor Young, who had bought it at public sale, took it out to New Orleans for sale, and could find none to buy it, where all were content with plain volantes.

"It became in time a kind of outhouse, in which fowls roosted; and in the great battle of New Orleans it stood between the combatants, and was greatly shot-ridden! Its gooseneck crane has been laid aside for me."

P. 581. "Washington's coach was presented to him, it is said, by Louis XVI, King of France, as a mark of personal esteem and regard. Others have said it had been brought out for the late Governor Penn. It was cream-colored, globular in its shape, and capacious within; ornamented in the French style, with Cupids supporting festoons and wreaths of flowers beautifully covered with fine glass, very white and dazzling to the eye of youth

and simplicity in such matters. It was drawn sometimes by four, but in common by two, very elegant Virginia bays, with long switch-tails and splendid harness, and driven by a tall and muscular German Fritz. On the death of Washington, this coach found its way to New Orleans, after the purchase of Louisiana and there being found at a plantation in the time of Pakenham's invasion, got riddled with shot and destroyed. The chief of its iron work has since been used in the palisade to H. Milne's grave."

Vol. III, p. 128. \* "There were two coaches of Washington's, as although Watson and Lossing apparently describe the same coach, they give different statements of its origin and its end. Watson says it was either presented to him by Louis XVI, or was imported for Governor Richard Penn; while Lossing in *Mount Vernon and its Associations*, says Washington imported it from England, etc. Watson says it was sold after Washington's death, and as early as 1804-5, he saw it in New Orleans, where it lay neglected and was finally destroyed in the British invasion and part of its iron was reserved for Mr. Watson, and the remainder was used around a grave; while Lossing says the English coach was purchased by the late Mr. Custis of Arlington when the effects of the General was sold after Mrs. Washington's death, and finally became the property of the Rt. Rev. Mr. Meade, who had it taken apart for souvenirs.

"Washington had three vehicles—one a post-chaise for traveling and the country; one a family coach; and another a chariot for state purposes. All were cream-colored, with three figures on the panels."

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"*History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*," by J. Thos. Scharf and Thompson Westcott, 1884.

P. 473. "On the 4th of March, Washington again took the oath of office as President of the United States.  
\* \* \* He proceeded to the State House in an elegant

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\* This work is in 3 vols. The 1st and 2d have been revised by Willis P. Hazard and the 3d entirely written by him, 1898.

white coach, drawn by six superb white horses having on its four sides beautiful designs of the four seasons painted by Cipriani."

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*"The First American, His Homes and His Households,"*  
by Leila Herbert, 1900.

[Opposite p. 44 is a picture of the Franklin House, Franklin Square, New York, with the cream-colored coach before the door. The panels and door show embellishments, the driver's seat is so high as to be almost on a level with the top of the coach, and it is draped with the ample folds of a hammer-cloth.]

P. 59. "The President's fine cream-colored coach arrived while he lived in the Franklin house. Capacious, it was ponderous, but beautiful—the Four Seasons painted on its panels, the Washington coat of arms on the doors. Six shining bay horses drew it when he drove to Federal Hall to deliver his first message to Congress."

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As the Washington coach built by Clarke was taken to pieces for relics some time prior to 1820 and as the art of daguerreotypy was not discovered until 1839 and photography not until many years later, there is probably no authentic picture extant of the Washington coach. The illustration referred to is by Harry Fenn and appears also in *Harper's Magazine* for October, 1899. A letter to Mr. Fenn in February, 1906, as to his authority for so depicting Washington's coach, elicited the following reply:

"284 PARK ST., UPPER MONTCLAIR, N. J.

"Ask me an easier one. The hundreds of drawings that I have made since 1899 has put the Franklin Square drawing into the limbo of the past. And from whence I obtained the authority I can not for the life of me recollect. The most likely explanation is the fact that I was born in



England and from ten years up I was forever sketching, and the ' Hammer-cloth ' was so familiar to me as a boy connected with EVERY coach of state, that in making the drawing in question I was fully convinced that the hammer-cloth would be the correct thing and any swell coach sent over from England would surely have one. Probably this is the explanation and a very natural one.

“ Cordially,  
“ Tuesday, 10 p. m.”

HARRY FENN.

As early as 1750 we find entries in Washington's book of expenses for the modest vehicle known as a " pole chair," for which he bought a new set of harness at a cost of 10£ 15s. Ten years later, he records a charge of 11s. " ferriage of one Chariot, 6 Horses and 2 Men, driver included "; and in the same year, 1760, he begins to pay a tax of 1£ 10s. for his chariot and riding-chair. In 1763 he has his riding-chair relined, the work being done by Thomas Boseley. In 1764 and in 1772 the same vehicle has to be repaired, and in 1791 he pays Col. William Deakins 18s. for " 12 Glasses for my Carriage made at the New Bremen Glass Manufactory."

There is a record, also, of two occasions upon which he gave away a carriage. While attending the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia, 1774, he gives 40£ for " a Chaize for my mother "; and after the death of his nephew, George Augustine Washington, he writes to the widow: " The carriage which I sent to Mount Vernon for your use, I never intended to reclaim, and therefore now making a more formal present of it, it may be sent for whenever it suits your convenience, and be considered as your own." There is also record of his having sold four carriages. Lund Washington, writing to him from Mount Vernon, September 2, 1778, says: " I received from Capt. Lewis 200£ for the Phæton which was the price agreed for before it was delivered." Mr. Mitchell in 1780 sold

Mrs. Washington's old coach to the builders from whom a new one was purchased for her. As the third carriage to be sold was not the personal property of General Washington, the proceeds were turned over to the Government. Here are extracts from two letters concerning it:

"I have sold the old Chariot, which formerly belonged to the Presidents of Congress, for 45£, to Mr. Brock't Livingston. As it had never been in your possession, I had some doubt whether it would be proper for me to dispose of it. But upon consulting with Colo. Hamilton he was fully of opinion that it was proper. The above price is the most I could get, as there was no harness to it, and the Coachmaker demanded 40£ to repair it and make a new sett of common harness."—*Tobias Lear to the President, New York, September 20, 1790.*

"The sale of the old Charriot was proper, for although the price is small, it will be so much saved for the public."—*Washington to Lear, September 27, 1790, Mount Vernon.*

Particulars of the fourth vehicle to be sold can be gathered from the letters of Washington, at Mount Vernon, to Clement Biddle in Philadelphia:

"Be so good as to ask Mr. Simmons what he has done with my old Coach and make the most you can of it." [August 23, 1797.]

"I have lately received a letter from a Mr. Small of Philadelphia informing me that the coach I used in the City was yet unsold;—that it was accumulating expense;—and not more than two hundred dollars had been offered for it, when according to his acct. \$300 was the value fixed thereon.

"I intended to have sent his letter to you, but it has been mislaid or lost—I shall beg the favor of you, however, to sell or cause it to be sold for whatever it will fetch. Who limited the price to \$300. I know not;—but took it for granted that it had been disposed of many days ago." [November 25, 1797.]

“If you conceive any advantage will result from a delay in the sale of the old Coach until the Spring it will be quite agreeable to me that it should be postponed.—To avoid the accumulating expense of House Room, and the injury such articles sustain by lying and often by neglect and tossing about was my inducement to the disposal of it *now*.—But it rests with you to choose the time.” [January 29, 1798.]

“I have already left it to your own judgment to fix a period for selling the old Coach, and I repeat it, you will have perceived, however, that the expenses thereon are accumulating; whilst in all probability the carriage is growing worse and worse in its appearance. The account which has been exhibited for keeping it (if the charge is not unusual) must be paid.—To me it appears very high.” [March 3, 1798.]

“I am sorry to find that the old Coach is likely to find so bad a market.—This was shipped by Mr. Dandridge at the time I left Philadelphia.—As the case now is, it will be better to break it up for the old Iron—than keep it longer on expenses.” [June 17, 1798.]

“For my Sentiments respecting the old Coach \* \* \* I refer to my last of the above date,—17th June.” [July 29, 1798.]

“Much has been said of Washington’s equipages, when at New York, and of his having four, and sometimes six horses before his carriage, with servants and outriders in rich livery. Such style we would premise was usual at the time both in England and the Colonies. \* \* \* It does not appear, however, that Washington ever indulged in it through ostentation. When he repaired to the Hall of Congress, at his inauguration, he was drawn by a single pair of horses in a chariot presented for the occasion, on the panels of which were emblazoned the arms of the United States.” [“Life of Washington” by Washington Irving, Vol. V, p. 19.] This was perhaps the “two-horse phaeton” of Jacob Hiltzheimer’s diary and the “post-chaise” whose first mention by Washington in his diary is: “December 2, 1789. [at New York.]—Exercised in the Post-Chaise with Mrs. Washington to-day.”

“Speaking of Carriages,—I have left my Coach to receive a *thorough* repair against I return (which I expect will happen before the first of December) and I request you will visit Mr. Clarke (into whose hands it is committed) often, to see it well done; and that I may not be disappointed in the time allowed him for the completion, which is by the 25th of November.”—*Washington to Lear, September 5, 1790.*

In the Washington correspondence, Library of Congress, may be found the following letters:


“PHILADELPHIA 13th September 1790.

“THE HON’BLE

“GEORGE WASHINGTON

“SIR:

“Your favor of the 9th Instant I have received—with Respect to Mr. Morris’s Coach, he has no Coat of Arms thereon, but a Cypher on Doors, back & front, with a Chryst over the Cypher, and no enclosure—the ground colour of your Coach being White, the silver in our opinion will have but a bad effect—Should you prefer continuing the seasons as already on the carriage, on the Doors, front, & Back, Your Chryst painted on the four quarter Pannels, all enclosed within the original Ovals, which corresponds with the mouldings of the Coach, would in our opinion look well, but should you prefer having your Cypher & Chryst in Silver, in place of the Seasons, it would look extremely well within the original Mouldings, & on a deep Silver Grey or purple Ground, and in our Opinion preferable to the other.

“Inclosed we hand you a draft of a Cypher done in the same Manner with that of Mr. Morris’s, also a pattern of the Cloth for the lining of the Coach, which we hope will meet with your approbation—Should you prefer the silver Cypher & Chryst, we would recommend having the Cypher only on front, Doors & Back, & the Chryst on the four quarter pannels with Ovals reversed from what they now are, by this we mean having the oval  this way—every attention in our power will also be paid to the harness, & we would recommend the following to make the

Coach uniform—a pair of plated handles to the Doors, plated Brass buckles & plated mouldings round the roof—there being no Glass or Frame in front of the Coach, would wish to know if we are to fix one in—We have the honor to be

“With the greatest Respect

“Sir

“Your Obed’t Servants

“DANIEL AND FRANCIS CLARK.”

“*Repairs for the Coach.*”

Taking out the Creans and reasing higher & a pair of new Shafts . . . . .	}	£7. 10. 0
A new iron Coach box Sett . . . . .		3. 15. 0
A new Ruff Leather & new Conish . . . . .		4. 12. 6
linning the Boady with 11½ yards of Super-fine Cloath at 37—6 pr yard . . . . .	} £21. 1. 3	} 38. 5. 3
Leaces Glass string &c a . . . . .	8. 14. 0	
making and putting in Do. . . . .	8. 10. 0	
A new fulle trimmed hamer Cloath . . . . .		12. 0. 0
repairs wanted to the boady & 2 pair of new hinges . . . . .		2. 0. 0
A pair of new double insid foulding Steps . . . . .		5. 10. 0
4 new bands to the hoobs of the wheels . . . . .		0. 10. 0
Painting the Boady and high Varnishing . . . . .		5. 10. 0
Boarder rond all the pannels from £8. to £115		
Ornaments & Coats of Arms . . . . .		4. 10. 0
Gilding the frame work Solid . . . . .		6. 0. 0
Painting Carriage and wheels . . . . .		2. 10. 0
Picking in Do. . . . .		1. 10. 0
8 Vinison blinds . . . . .		22. 10. 0
Gilding the Springs . . . . .		2. 5. 0
A sett of Silke festoon Curtains with fringes and tosals to all the insid of the Ruff . . }		8. 0. 0”

“To Mes’rs. D. & FRANCIS CLARK

“Philadelphia.

“Sir,

“From the best judgment I can form of the repairs and alterations to make in my old *Coach* (under the statement and opinions given in your letter of the 13th instant) I feel most inclined to give you the following directions for your procedure that no delay or disappointment may happen.

“The coulour is to be as at present;—but to be neatly painted and highly varnished.—

“The Seasons (which are now on the carriage) is to be continued on the doors, front and back—and my crest

without any cipher is to be on the four quarter panels; all to be enclosed with the original ovals.—If it is thought best that the crest should be painted (as Silver does not show on a light ground) they may be painted.—But quere, whether if some ornamental painting within the Oval, and around the Silver crests, (the colours of which should form a contrast to the silver and not be inconsistent with other parts of the work) might not look well. This is only suggested, for you may have painted, or silver crests put on according to your own judgment of the propriety & uniformity.—

“The Seasons if they should require it (and a masterly hand can be employed) must be repaired,—or at least freshened in their appearance to make them correspond with the fresh painting of the Coach, & as festoons were on the coach before, ought they not to be there again if the seasons &c. are retained.—I approve of the pattern sent as lining for the Coach and desire you may use it.—Plated handles to the doors—plated brace buckles, and plated mouldings around the roof should be added to make one part correspond with the other.—A Glass in front must unquestionably be provided.—In all other respects you are to observe the directions which were given when I saw you in Philadelphia.—

“I am, &c.

“GEO. WASHINGTON.

“Mount Vernon

“September 17th 1790.”

“I have paid several visits to Mr. Clarke since my arrival, and find he is at work on the Coach and harness, which he assures me shall be completed by the middle of November; and from appearances I have no doubt of it. He has applied to me for the crest of your arms which he says you directed him to put on the Coach and harness, and I have accordingly furnished him with it, from an impression of the seal which I have in my possession.—He wishes to know if you would have the motto of your Arms over the crest, or only a wreath round the plate on which it is painted similar to those round the Seasons.”—*Lear to Washington, Philadelphia, October 24, 1790.*

Most of Washington's equipages were built in England and several were imported through the firm of "Robert Cary, Esqr. & Co. of London," a house that handled all of his exported tobacco and attended to much of his English business; but there came a time when the coach-makers of Philadelphia could compete with their foreign fellow-craftsmen and we are not surprised to find the General seeking the aid of a trusted friend, John Mitchell of Philadelphia, in the selection and purchase of an American-built coach. Washington was one of those rare characters who knew exactly what he wanted and could state his requirements in precise terms, from the qualifications of a general to the color of a hair-ribbon, from the rotation of crops to be observed on his farm to the style of a silver plate for the door of his pew in old Christ Church, Alexandria. Accordingly his instructions for this new vehicle were minute; and Mr. Mitchell seems to have been both zealous and particular; witness the following correspondence:

*Washington to Mitchell.*

"HEADQUARTERS, MORRIS TOWN,  
20 March, 1780.

"D'R SIR,

"You will do me a favor by enquiring & letting me know as soon as possible, if any good coach maker in Phila. or German Town (Bringinghurst for instance) will engage to make me a genteel plain chariot with real [lead?] Harness for four horses to go with two postilions—I wish to know the terms and in how short a time it can be done—I also beg to know if the harness could be soon had without the carriage. That the workmen may be at no loss to fix a just price on these things on acc't of the fluctuating & uncertain state of our curr'y he may make his estimates in specie which shall either be paid him immediately upon delivery of the work—or in paper money at the difference of exchange then prevailing—

be it little or much—this will put the matter upon so clear & unequivocal a footing that he can be at no loss in fixing prices nor be under the smallest inducem't to ask an enormous price in order to g'd. against the evil consequences of depreciation. \* \* \*

“P. S. I beg the favor of you to enquire further whether nails & other kind of mounting, & trimmings, necessary to the lining and finishing of a chariot could be had in any of the shops—or from any of the coach makers in Phila.—there is a good workman at Springfield (in this State) but he has not this kind of furniture by him necessary to compleat a char't.”

*Mitchell to Washington.*

“PHILA. 25 March, 1780.

“D'R. SIR

“Your Excellency's favors of the 17th & 20th were delivered to me yesterday. have made particular Inquiry at the several Coach Makers and have found a Neat Gentee Chariot which is near finished, and can be compleated with Harness for four Horses in two or three Weeks, the price is Two Hundred & Ten Pounds in Gold or the Value thereof in current money. I can not procure one under this sum from any of the workmen here & believe it is the lowest price. the man who has it has promised to wait a Week for your Excellency's answer.

“I believe all the Necessary Furniture and Lining can be procured here for a Chariot if you chuse to have one made, but doubt much if it will be cheaper. I can not ascertain what the Furniture &c. will cost, as some part must be made here, and others bought at Different places.  
\* \* \*

*Washington to Mitchell.*

“HEAD QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, 30 March, 1780  
“D'R. SIR

“Your Letter of the 25th did not come to my hands till yesterday afternoon.

“I will take the chariot at the price of Two hundred and ten pounds in gold, provided you have examined it



yourself with a critical eye or will get some good judge or judges to do it and they shall be of opinion that it is made in the present taste—well fashioned—composed of seasoned wood well put together—and also that it has, or is to have a proper lining &c. \* \* \* I wish you had mentioned the maker's name of the one offered you—if it is a common sale chariot, & the workman does not stand much upon his character, it may be of little worth from the slightness of it.

“In case you should purchase, please to have my arms and crest properly disp'd. of on the chariot. I send them for this purpose. \* \* \*”

Although the gentlemen who accompanied Mr. Mitchell to examine this chariot critically, agreed that “it was good work & neatly finished in the present Taste, the wood \* \* \* well seasoned,” they judged it to be too small for a man built on the generous proportions of the General, who stood six feet three inches, in his stockings, for the dimensions were “3 feet 4 Inches high from the seat to the top, and 3 feet 6 Inches wide in the inside.” Hearing of a somewhat larger carriage, Mr. Mitchell hastens to examine that and writes:

“PHILA, 4 April 1780

\* \* \* \* \*

“This day I went to Germantown & have prevailed on Mr. Bringhurst to let you have a Chariot he has in hand—it appears to be good Work & well seasoned timber, the size is 3 feet 6½ Inches high & 3 feet 10 Inches wide—& will have a very good second Cloth or better if to be got this will be ready in Six weeks, the former in Ten days, the price is the same. Mr. Craner [?] is the maker of the first; Mr. Barret Paints both.”

On April 8, 1780, Washington writes further instructions:

“It may not be amiss to ornament the mouldings with a light airy gilding—this will add a little to the expence

and much to the appearance.—The Harness I would have stout and strong, at the same time neatly made and ornamented and of good leather.”

Mitchell reports progress on April 17, 1780,

“as the Chariot will be at the Painter’s next week, wou’d wish your Excellency to inform me of the Colour you wou’d chuse it to be, also whether you wou’d chuse the Leading Harness to hook to the Wheel Horses Harness, or by a swingle tree fixed to the Pole—and if you wou’d chuse brass boxes to the Hubs of the Wheels.”

On the 26th of June, 1780, Mitchell writes:

“the Chariot will be finished on Thursday or Friday next, & I believe will please your Lady.”—Finally on the 19th of July he reports: “I sold the old chariot to Mr. Bringhurst for £27. 10., hard money, which I deducted out of the price of the new chariot. I have the money awaiting your commands.”

Washington had made timely provision for paying for this carriage, as on April 15, 1780, he wrote to Lund Washington at Mount Vernon: “I have ordered a chariot to be made in Phila.—The price £210 in specie, or Paper equivalent.” In May, Lund Washington forwarded £218. 0. 6 to Mr. Mitchell, and July 26, 1780, Washington closed the entire transaction by writing to Mr. Mitchell:

“I thank you for the trouble you have had about the chariot. The sum for which the old one sold and w’ch you say lyes in your hands, you will be so good as to pay to Mrs. Washington’s order.”

The constantly recurring assurance that the wood of the new carriage was *well seasoned* has reference to a most vexatious experience Washington had had some years previous.

"In 1768, Washington ordered from London a chariot, to be made in the newest taste, handsome, genteel, and light, of the best and fully seasoned wood, and by a celebrated workman. Some months later the coach was shipped from London, with a full account from its maker of its many noticeable features, and with a warrant of being of the highest workmanship. The facts did not correspond to the glowing description, and Washington soon had good reason to complain of having been imposed upon, even after making some allowances for a difference of climate. The wood proved to be so exceedingly green, instead of seasoned, that the panels slipped out of the mouldings before the coach had been two months in use, and splitting from end to end, could not be repaired."—*"George Washington," by W. C. Ford, 1900, Vol. I, p. 121.*

It was in this unsatisfactory carriage that Mrs. Washington drove to Morristown in 1780 and which Mr. Mitchell sold to Bringham for "£27. 10., hard money," Mrs. Washington returned to Mount Vernon in the newly completed chariot, for which she had waited in Philadelphia for some three or four weeks. The price of the old chariot, after deducting the cost of a Marseilles quilt and repairs to Washington's watch, was placed in her hands by Mr. Mitchell, agreeably to instructions received from the General.\*

*Claypoole's "American Daily Advertiser," Philadelphia, Tuesday, March 7, 1797; also 8, 9 and 10.*

#### "Sale of Elegant Furniture.

"On Friday next the 10th instant, at 1 o'clock, will be sold at public Auction, at the House of the late President of the United States, in Market street,

"A QUANTITY of Valuable Household Furniture, belonging to General Washington, among which are, a

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\*"New England Historical and Genealogical Register," Vol. 54, pp. 266-269; 422-425.

number of Elegant Chairs with Sattin Bottoms, sattin Window Curtains, a Beautiful Cut Glass Lustre, and a very complete Mahogany Writing Desk, also a Coach and Phaeton.

“FOOTMAN & Co.,  
“Auctioneers.”

“*Washington Federalist*,” June 24, 1802.

“For Sale

“At Mount Vernon,

“On the 20th day of July, and to continue until all is disposed of, for cash, the Household & Kitchen Furniture, consisting of almost every description, some valuable Prints and Pictures, also a pipe of choice Old Madeira Wine. Notice is further given, that all persons having claims against the estate of Mrs. Martha Washington, late of Fairfax county, deceased, are requested to exhibit them to the subscribers, with vouchers therefor, and every one indebted to the same are desired to make immediate payment.

“THOMAS PETER, }  
“G. W. P. CUSTIS, } *Executors.*

“The executors of General Washington will avail themselves of the above opportunity, and offer for sale on six months credit a number of *valuable cattle* the greater part of them from imported stock, about five hundred head of Sheep, and nearly the same number of Hogs, together with one elegant Chariot & Coachee, with Harness compleat for four horses; also four carriage and two riding Horses, with a number of Farming Utensils, Camp Equipage, and a variety of other articles too numerous to particularize.

“THE EXECUTORS.

“June 24th, 1802.”

## The Spurious Washington Coach.

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*"Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in the Olden Time," by John F. Watson, 1842, 1st and 2d vols. revised and 3d vol. written by Willis P. Hazard, 1898.*

[Watson knew what he was writing about and gave the end of the white coach in New Orleans, degraded to a hen-house, and riddled with shot at the battle; but Hazard, while confirming these statements, adds:]

"I have seen this Carriage. It was brought from New Orleans and exhibited on Chestnut Street as a curiosity. Every one who was desirous of sitting where Washington had sat, paid twenty-five cents for the privilege. It was then stored away in a *coach-factory* and was again exhibited in 1876, at the Centennial Exhibition. It is now at the Permanent Exhibition."

[Could any one who saw the alleged "Washington Coach" exhibited at the Centennial Exposition, believe for a moment that it had been used as a hen-house, had stood out-of-doors in all kinds of weather, been riddled with bullets, completely destroyed, deprived of its goose-neck crane, and the rest of its iron work used to fence a grave?]

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The Powel coach, existing to the present day, has been photographed many times; but all the photographs of this equipage, and they are many, whether they are truthfully labeled as the *Powel* coach, or falsely as the *Washington* coach, show the low driving seat without a hammer-cloth

but protected at the side with arms like a chair. The panels in these pictures are plain and the doors are unemblazoned, because when the Powel coach was put forward as the Washington coach, the telltale "Powel arms had to be covered with paint." [Miss M. E. Powel to R. L. Brownfield, July 25, 1895.] It thus appears in a lithographic reproduction of a photograph taken in 1872, when on the 22d of February the United Order of American Mechanics celebrated the 140th anniversary of the birthday of the Father of his Country by a procession in the city of New York in which the fraudulent coach was one of the greatest attractions. The legend under the picture gives Mr. William Dunlap as its custodian, thus innocently identifying it as the Powel coach. It appeared again on September 1, 1888, as part of the Buckeye Buggy Company's exhibit in the Columbus, Ohio, Centennial celebration of the settlement of that State, and was borrowed by that firm from Capt. Benjamin Richardson of 514 East 116th Street, New York City. His grandson, a lad, dressed in continental uniform, sat with the driver. The photograph shows the now familiar low driving seat, undraped, also the plain panels and doors.

*Correspondence Between R. L. Brownfield and Buckeye Buggy Company.*

" COLUMBUS, OHIO.

" 5 | 14 | 1903.

" MR. R. L. BROWNFIELD,

" 85 West Main Street, Uniontown, Pa.,

" DEAR SIR: Yours of the 27th was just given to me to answer. In reply would be glad to accommodate you in any way that we can but as a matter of fact we have nothing whatever, to prove that the carriage we had on exhibition formerly belonged to Geo. Washington.\* We

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\* Centennial celebration of the first settlement of Ohio, September 1, 1888.

simply took it on faith and asked no questions. We have no printed matter or anything that relates to the carriage except a large photograph of the carriage with horses hitched to it as it appeared in the parade. \* \* \*

“ALFRED L. WILLSON,  
“*Prest. Buckeye Buggy Company.*”

“6 | 27, 1903.

“DEAR SIR: Referring to your letter of May 14th in reference to the George Washington coach, will say that we have just run across photograph of the coach and herewith mail it to you under separate cover. \* \* \*

“F. L. HUGHES,  
“*Vice-Prest. Buckeye Buggy Co.*”

[Photograph of Fair Grounds, Columbus, Ohio. Description: frame cottage in which General Grant was born, brought to the Grounds for exhibition purposes. Same coach as one exhibited at Centennial, also Lafayette's coach. Baker's Art Gallery.]

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*Legend Under a Picture Published by A. O. Crane, Boston, Massachusetts.*

“Gen. Washington's Carriage  
“(Nearly 100 years old.)

“A correct representation, as it appeared in the procession of the United Order of American Mechanics, in New York, Feb. 22, 1872, on the 140th birthday of the Father of his Country. \* \* \* The carriage was built during Washington's first Presidential term, and is still reverently preserved by its present owner, in charge of Mr. William Dunlap, of the Phoenix Coach Works, Philadelphia.”

[Dunlap's custodianship identifies this as the same carriage shown at the Centennial Exposition; it follows, therefore, that the panels and doors are plain and the driver's seat is much below the top of the coach, and without the hammer-cloth.]

*Correspondence in Relation to the Coach Exhibited at the  
Centennial Exposition as Washington's Coach.*

" PHILADELPHIA, May 7, 1903.

" MR. R. L. BROWNFIELD,

" Uniontown, Pa.,

" DEAR SIR: Your letter of May 4th came duly to hand, and, I have to say, that Mr. Wanamaker is absent in Europe at the present time, and the subject of which you write was a matter of which his former partner, Mr. John R. Houghton, was quite familiar some years ago.

" It appears that the firm procured the loan of what was at that time believed to be the 'Washington Coach,' and exhibited it in a street parade. The same coach was afterwards exhibited in the Centennial Exposition of 1876.

" I have referred the matter to the gentleman mentioned above, who believes that the coach to which you refer, is the same that was exhibited in '76. He received letters from Newport, R. I., stating that the coach belonged to the Powel Estate; that it never belonged to Gen. Washington, but that Gen. Washington being a guest of the Powel family, on several occasions, rode from their home in what is now West Philadelphia, over to Christ Church in it.

" The coach is exactly like the 'Washington coach,' but the original coach was taken to Virginia, possibly more than a century ago, and parts of it placed in a church somewhere in that State, but where, we do not know of any one now living that can give any correct information about it.

" Very respectfully yours,

" H. S. JONES,

" Secretary,

" with John Wanamaker."

" PHILADELPHIA, May 11th, 1903.

" MR. R. L. BROWNFIELD,

" Uniontown, Pa.

" DEAR SIR: I have your letter of May 9th, and, in reply, would say that I have no additional information concerning the Powel Coach of which you wrote me, than



that which was forwarded by Mr. Jones, and the extracts from Miss Mary E. Powel's letter to you, which you have enclosed to me.

"I believe that the coach which was exhibited at the Centennial Exposition in 1876 was never owned by George Washington.

"When I was in partnership with Mr. John Wanamaker about 1871 or 1872, there was a parade in Philadelphia, at which time I rented the coach from Mr. Dunlap, who then had it in his possession.

"Very respectfully yours,  
"J. R. HOUGHTON."

"PHILADELPHIA, *Sept. 20th, 1894.*

"Mr. R. L. BROWNFIELD,

"15 Michigan Ave., Chicago.

"DEAR SIR: Your favor of the 18th received and noted. In reference to the Washington Carriage we would say that the last knowledge we had of it was in 1876, when it was exhibited at the Centennial Exhibition. After the close of the Exhibition, we understood it was bought by a New York party for exhibition at a museum in that city. The carriage did not belong to us, but was owned by William Dunlap, an old Philadelphia carriage maker now deceased.

"Yours truly,

"WM. D. RODGERS, SON & Co.

"Carriage Builders

"919 & 921 Walnut street."

"NEW YORK, *May 18, 1903.*

"Mr. R. L. BROWNFIELD, &c.

"DEAR SIR: Your favor of May 16th received and as regards the question whether the coach which has been exhibited was ever owned by Washington, would say that evidence seems to be against it.

"The coach was exhibited as the Washington Coach at different times and among these Wood's Museum. Mr. Dunlap also had it, at one time, in his repository but he admitted that it was not Washington's Coach, in fact, I do not think that he exhibited it as a Washington Coach,

but called it the Powel Coach and I am inclined to believe it is a Powel Coach.

“Yours very truly,

“TRADE NEWS PUBLISHING CO.

“W. N. FITZGERALD,

“*Editor.*”

*The World on Wheels. Ezra M. Stratton.*

P. 416. “Probably the only old coach of American manufacture in existence to-day is the one still preserved in a good state, in the city of Philadelphia, falsely represented as having belonged to our Gen. George Washington at one time, and palmed off as such on more than one public occasion since, in the city of New York, backed by the entire press! We have the strongest reasons for believing Washington never owned this coach, and never even rode in it; and yet the managers of some Sanitary Fairs have charged their dupes a fee for the privilege of sitting a few moments on the cushions where the illustrious Washington once did—not.

“We have already shown what became of Washington’s imported coach. [Same account as that given in Watson’s “Annals of Philadelphia.”] It now remains to give the history of the one here engraved from a photograph, taken expressly for this volume in February, 1872. Our authority is Mr. Charles Perrie, an aged carriage-maker of the city of Philadelphia. He tells us, and is endorsed by others, that ‘this coach was built in 1790, by David Clarke,’ who was a Scotchman and had a shop on Sixth, between Chestnut and Market Streets, Philadelphia, to the order of Samuel Powel of that city. After his death, it became the property of his widow, who retained it until she died, when it fell into the hands of Col. John Hare Powel, a nephew of Mrs. Samuel Powel.’ It cost as near as our informant recollected, about \$800. For a long time this carriage, ‘as a willful mistake,’ was exhibited as Washington’s in Wood’s Museum. At a later period, it ‘ornamented’ the repository of William Dunlap, who likewise gave us the history of this coach. It has since been disposed of to a Mr. Wharton.”

[In the accompanying illustration the panels and door are without ornamentation and the driver's seat is so low that the reins come in almost a straight line from the horses' heads to the driver's hands. There is no hammer-cloth.]

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In the "Report of the Centennial Celebration of Washington's Inauguration, New York City, April 30, 1889," under the head of "Civic and Industrial Parade" occurs this paragraph:

"Colored Centennial Committee, commanded by George W. Lattimore, 1500. An organization of several associations and committees, some uniformed, accompanying one of George Washington's coaches (or at least a very old coach, similar to one owned by Washington), drawn by four horses."

A year later, on the evening of March 4, 1890, Mr. George W. W. Houghton, editor of *The Hub*, read a paper before the New York Historical Society entitled "The Coaches of Colonial New York." In this paper he gave the true history of the Powel coach and criticised the Centennial Committee for admitting it into the parade as Gen. Washington's coach. This provoked much inquiry and research and drew forth, among others, the following letter:

"November 14, 1900.

"DEAR MR. HARE:

"In answer to your inquiry with regard to the genuineness of what is known as the Washington coach, I write you this to tell you what my father, the late Samuel Powel, of Newport and of Philadelphia, has always told me with regard to that matter.

"My father's great-aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Powel, the wife of Samuel Powel, of Philadelphia, was an intimate friend of General George Washington. When the Wash-

ington coach was ordered, Mrs. Powel also ordered a similar coach in the same order. To make this history as brief as possible, the Powel coach was not destroyed and came down to her descendants, who parted with it many years ago, as it had become entirely antiquated and useless, but the Washington coach for some reason or other was destroyed.

“ During the exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, when the Powel coach was exhibited for the Washington coach, my father was asked to state the genuineness of the coach. He stated at that time, with many regrets, that it was his great-aunt’s coach that was exhibited and not the Washington coach, which had been destroyed. In spite of this the coach has always been known as the Washington coach; I have very little doubt, however, that General Washington may have frequently driven in the coach.

“ In corroboration of this hypothesis, I may add that Mrs. Powel constantly entertained General Washington in Philadelphia, and the intimacy of their acquaintance is attested by numerous ‘relics’ now owned by my late father’s estate, including some thirty letters from Gen. Washington to Mrs. Powel.

“ I may add, by way of further interest, that Mrs. Elizabeth Powel adopted my father’s father, John Hare Powel, who changed his name from Hare to Powel at her solicitude, she having no children.

“ Yours truly,

“ ROBERT J. HARE POWEL.

“ Montgomery Hare, Esq.”

[Mrs. Powel, before her marriage, was Miss Elizabeth Willing, of Philadelphia; and her husband, Mayor Samuel Powel, died in 1793 of yellow fever.]

## True History of the So-called "Washington Coach."

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" 25 BOWERY STREET, NEWPORT, R. I.

" July 25, 1895.

"R. L. BROWNFIELD, Esq.,

" DEAR SIR: My uncle, Mr. John Hare Powel, has handed me your letter respecting the so-called ' Washington Coach ' for reply.

" In brief—If you will look into Bishop Meade's book on Virginia families (any large library will give you its exact title) you will find an account of the General's coach which the Bishop destroyed.—This *Powel coach*, which for half a century (nearly) has figured as the General's, was built at the same time as the General's; in England, I think; and with the exception of four copper, decorative panels *is an exact fac-simile of the one destroyed*. Mrs. Powel and General and Mrs. Washington were intimate friends. Their carriages were ordered at the same time and of the same maker. Mrs. Powel's coach was blazoned on the door with the Powel arms, they are probably to be found there yet under the paint. I *think* the coach was originally yellowish white or cream (possibly from age) when I first remember it. Mrs. Powel had the high seat removed and the present coachman's seat put on; for, as she and her coachman grew old together, she feared he might jolt off."

[Down to the close of the 18th century it does not appear to have been the custom for a builder to stamp, paint or engrave his name on the vehicles he turned out. Clarke's name does not appear on any part of the Mount Vernon coach, but stamped on the two springs of the

driver's seat is the legend—"Geo. Heyberger, Phila." Now George Heyberger appears in the Philadelphia directory from 1817 to 1825 inclusive. He was a "coach-spring maker," living at No. 50 Coats Street and having his place of business in Emlen's Court. His father was a blacksmith, living at 351 North Front Street from 1802 to 1822, when he died. His smithy in 1802 and '3 was at 21 Artillery Lane and after that on Noble Street.

The original high seat of the Powel coach was, therefore, removed and the present low seat on springs substituted by George Heyberger of Philadelphia some time between 1817 and 1825. The name of "William Dunlap, coachmaker," does not appear in the Philadelphia directory until 1843 and Col. John Hare Powel gave him the Powel coach about 1855.]

"When General Washington returned to Mount Vernon from Phila. *he sold Mrs. Powel his horses*, and he had at various times ridden in the Powel carriage; (I hold the receipt for \$1,000.00 signed by Mr. Lear). One horse proved defective and the General sent a pair of handsome sconce looking glasses as a 'make weight.' You will see a pair illustrated in Lossing's 'Mt. Vernon.' Mrs. Powel (Miss E. Willing) was my grandfather's, Col. John Hare Powel's, aunt, and after her death in 1830—up to which time she used this carriage (and my father told me that he, a child, frequently drove in it to visit the neighboring gentry, &c.)—the carriage remained in the stable at Powelton and my grandfather was persecuted by visitors insisting that it was Gen. W's own coach. This the family for almost a century, have always denied and to go into the details of the various efforts made to buy and sell it, of which I have several, would be too long for a letter, besides no one believes us when they want to sell it and frequently buyers are equally indignant. In the fifties, the dear old carriage appeared here in a circus and I remember my father's being much upset by seeing it unexpectedly and the remembrances it brought him. My grandfather stored the carriage with Mr. Dunlap to get

it out of the way, *not* to show it. Finally he gave it to Mr. D., who had built him many carriages, as a relic of antiquity—and after the coach-builder's death, his family sold it. It has figured in circuses, shows, at the Centennial, &c. Mr. Wanamaker wished to buy it, but declined after writing to one of the family. Mr. John Austin Stevens would not have admitted it into one of the great Revolutionary commemorative processions in N. Y. some 12 or 15 years back, had he known in time and it was not in the Washington procession a few years ago.

"I should add that the coach's owners at the Centennial presented an affidavit signed by a former servant, which was not true—she, a very old woman, may have believed it herself. At that time various persons, intending to purchase the coach, had received information from my father (the late Samuel Powel, eldest son of Col. J. H. Powel,) exactly in accord with this present letter.

"I am truly yours

"MARY EDITH POWEL."

[In an earlier letter, Miss Powel writes:]

"A person named Steel or Steele was employed at one time at Powelton, I believe, but am not sure—perhaps in the farmhouse or dairy—or in the large dwelling—but I consider it *very* unlikely indeed that Col. Powel ever employed any woman in any capacity about the barns, stables, or even in the old coach-house where the carriage of which you write, stood.

"A long time after, I remember seeing a talkative old person at the door of the Academy of Natural Sciences, and much later, about thirty years ago, I recall hearing some members of our family say that she had made mistakes about the carriage and that probably her memory was *very* defective." [July 22, 1893.]

[In a later letter occurs this paragraph:]

"I have promised Mr. Dodge at Mt. Vernon to write him as full an account as possible of our old family coach, now in honorable retreat at that place. It is interesting

being, with very small exceptions, a duplicate of the coach destroyed by Bishop Meade, ordered and bought from the same maker when Gen. W. ordered and bought his. When Gen. Washington was the guest of Mayor and Mrs. Powel, he frequently rode in it and this is the origin of the world's calling it 'Gen. W's *own* carriage,' but Col. Powel always stated these facts about it." [November 12, 1903.]

"My uncle, Col. Powel, was a lad of sixteen or so when Powelton was sold. The barn was burned by incendiaries some time previous to our leaving, but our own coach was kept in 'the old coach-house' and that was not burned, altho' I am not sure if the coach had already, at that date, been removed to Dunlap's or no." [November 21, 1903.]

There is testimony of three Washington coaches being destroyed: first, the one shot to pieces at the battle of New Orleans; the second, taken to pieces by order of Bishop Meade; and a third that was likewise taken to pieces by Henry Dunlap, Sr., coach-builder of Philadelphia. Mrs. Amelia C. Clark of 456 Franklin Street, Philadelphia, Pa., testifies in a sworn statement of September 26, 1907, that her grandfather, Henry Dunlap, Sr., owned such a carriage; it was "built in France and was of peculiar construction." When it was "put out of use as the result of old age, it was dismembered or taken apart" for relics. "Mrs. Mary Dunlap, widow of Henry Dunlap, Sr., before her death, presented two of the four copper medallions from the panels to the United States Government." A third medallion is at present the property of Lewis Dunlap (great-grandson of Henry Dunlap, Sr.), who resides on Colona Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Of the fourth medallion, the Dunlap family have no knowledge. Mrs. Clark owns the cushion from the back seat of this same coach. Henry Dunlap, Sr., died September 15, 1835, of old age. Henry Dunlap, Jr., July 6, 1887, of senile asthenia.



Application to the National Museum for any information they could give concerning the "two medallions given to the United States Government" elicited the following:

"Replying to your inquiry addressed to Mr. A. H. Clark, I beg to say that the National Museum has a panel which is said to have belonged to Washington's coach, but the files contain no information as to its history other than that given on the label, a copy of which is enclosed. There is no other in the Museum." [R. Rathbun, Assistant Secretary in charge of National Museum, to Mrs. M. S. Beall, Oct. 25, 1907.]

*Copy of Enclosed Label :*

"Painted Panel.—From State coach used by General Washington when President. Body, cream color; quarter panels, with the four seasons painted by Capriani [Cipriani]. This panel was presented to the National Institute by Mrs. Mary Dunlap, of Georgetown, D. C. 92,537.

Transferred from the Patent Office in 1883."

The medallion in the National Museum representing three naked children gathering flowers corresponds in every detail with the one owned by Mr. Lewis Dunlap which represents three naked children gathering grapes. In 1903 Mrs. Beall was shown a medallion at the National Museum, differing in many respects from the two described above, and told it was from Washington's state coach and had been presented to the Government by Bishop Meade.

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## Copies of Letters, &c., Concerning the Powel "Centennial" Coach.

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"International Exposition

"1876

"United States Centennial Commission.

"PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 27, 1876.

"BENJ. RICHARDSON:

"Your favor of 17th inst. was duly rec'd. The 'Coach' is not sold yet and only \$700 is offered, which sum the party owning it has thus far refused to accept—I am now inclined to think that if you offered \$650 I might induce him to let it go for a *good purpose*.

"I think the Buffalo party would give \$800. but I told him that nothing less than \$1000. would buy it.

"If you still think favorable of buying it I will try and close it to you for \$650.

"In haste

S. F. MERRILL, *Sup.*

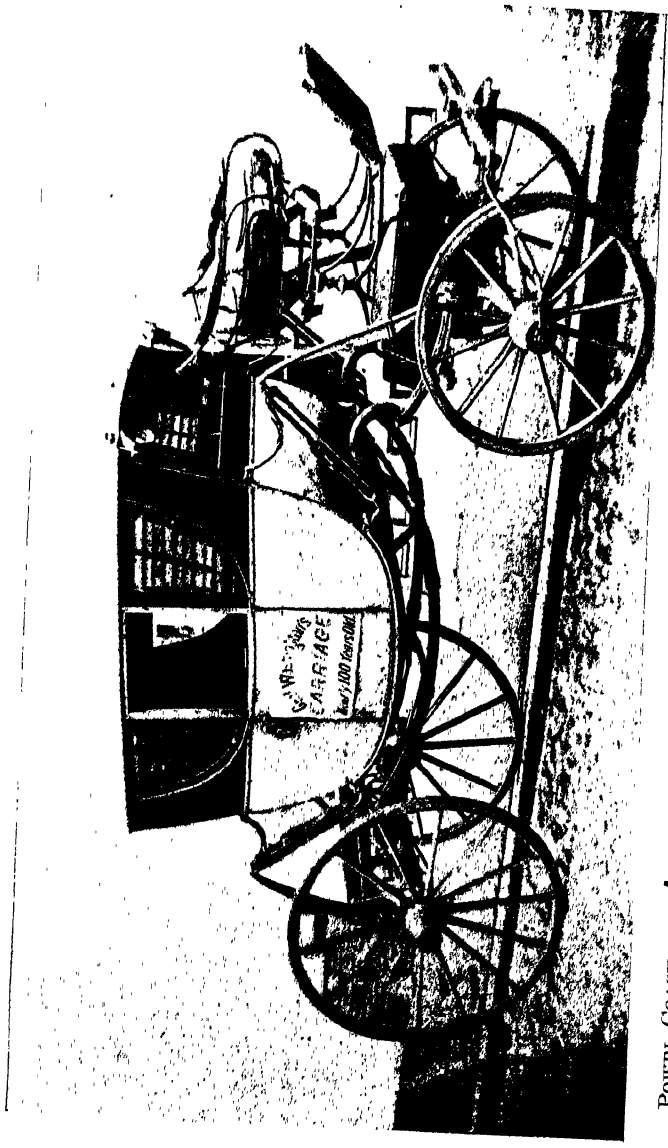
"M. B. Annex.

"Cen. Grounds."

"NEW YORK, Nov. 28th 1876.

"To Mr. MERRILL

"DEAR FRIEND: Your favour of 27th Came Duly to hand & I am pleased to hear from you & thank you for your good feelings towards Charitys & Bind my self by this letter to Pay \$650. as Requested by you & you will Please write me when you have Closed it & I Can Come



POWEL COACH, AS EXHIBITED AT CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION, PHILADELPHIA, 1876; IN COACH-HOUSE  
AT MOUNT VERNON SINCE 1901.



lightaway you will please use all Exertions to secure  
 Carriage and am

“Yours Very Truly

“BENJAMIN RICHARDSON

shall have to Examine to see that  
 is WASHINGTON'S CARRIDGE  
 your Assistance.”

*Extract from Will of Benj. Richardson.*

I give, devise & bequeath to my daughter Sarah Jane  
 my granddaughter Ella Birdsall in equal parts my  
 estate No. 514 E. 116th Street & the six lots on 115th  
 in N. Y. City used herewith, together with all the  
 the hold furniture, beds, bedding, crockery, furniture,  
 curiosities, & also the 'Washington Coach' to them,  
 heirs & assigns forever" &c., &c., &c.

“BROOKLYN, N. Y., July 12, 1907.

Whom it May Concern:

I desire to state that the so-called 'Washington  
 Coach' now on exhibition at Mount Vernon, Va., by the  
 Officers' Association of the Union was formerly my prop-  
 erty. I having inherited it from Mr. Benjamin Richardson,  
 purchased it during or immediately after the close of  
 the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876.

While I have always believed that the coach was one  
 of the property of General George Washington, it is  
 a positive fact that I never had any reliable or absolute  
 proof that General Washington either owned or ever used  
 the Coach.

“(Signed) ELLA T. GOUVERNEUR.

Witnesseth:

“JNO. J. HARMAN.”

*Statement of Michael Karam, made at New York City.*

“TUESDAY, August 27th, 1907.

Whom it may concern:—

I, Michael Karam, do hereby certify that I was at one  
 time the owner of the coach now in possession of the

Ladies' Association of the Union and on exhibition at Mt. Vernon, Va., which coach is known as 'Washington's Chariot.' This is the same coach that was purchased by the late Mr. Benjamin Richardson in 1876 from or through a Mr. Merrill, who was at that time connected with the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Mr. Richardson bequeathed this coach jointly, with a number of other relics, to his daughter, Sarah Jane Richardson and Ella Birdsall, his grand-daughter, now Mrs. Gouvernor [*sic*] of Williamsburgh, Brooklyn, N.Y. Sarah Jane Richardson bequeathed her interest jointly, in this coach and other relics, to my wife, who was a grand-daughter of Benjamin Richardson, and to Selina Birdsall, my wife's sister, who later became Mrs. Joseph Cooper. I then bought out both Mrs. Cooper's and Mrs. Gouvernor's [*sic*] interest in the coach. I tried to sell the coach to the Mt. Vernon Association, through Mr. Dodge, Superintendent of the Association, but failed to do so on account of not having any proofs to offer that General George Washington either owned, used or ever heard of the coach. Later a gentleman named Frey, at whose barn I had the coach stored, endeavored to dispose of the coach to John Wanamaker of Philadelphia, also to the Daughters of the American Revolution. Frey acted as my agent in calling upon these latter people, but he failed to make a sale on account of not having any legitimate proof to offer that the coach had ever been owned, used, or was ever known of by General George Washington. Frey later told me that he had a customer for the coach, but he never told me who the party was, and, without any authority from me to sell it to unknown parties, he disposed of the coach, afterwards refusing to tell me to whom, and, always stating that I should not worry about collecting the money on the sale of the coach, as he had safe-guarded my interest in the sale. He had advanced me money on the sale of the coach, something like \$250.00 or \$275.00. I can not recall the exact amount.

"The only evidence that Mr. Richardson could ever advance to prove that General George Washington ever owned, used, or was even aware of the existence of the

coach was the affidavit made by Henry Dunlap, June 12th, 1876, and the affidavit made by Elizabeth Steele [*sic*] on May 27th, 1876. These papers, with a number of newspaper and magazine clippings, fell into my possession at the time that I bought out the interest of Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Gouvernor, [*sic*] and these papers were turned over to Frey at the time that I delegated him to act as my agent. I never later heard to whom he sold the coach, but did know that through some person's purchase, it came into the possession of the Ladies Association of the Union.

[SEAL]                      " (Signed)    MICHAEL KARAM  
 " Witnesseth.  
     " J. O. SCHWAUD."

“ County of N. Y. }  
“ STATE OF NEW YORK }

“ On this 27th., day of August 1907, before me personally came Michael Karam, to me personally known and known to me to be the individual described in and who executed the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

"E. D. JUNIOR  
"Notary Public, Kings Co.  
"Certificate filed New York Co."

# Opinion Rendered by Professor J. F. Jameson.

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“CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON

“DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH  
“J. FRANKLIN JAMESON  
“Director

“WASHINGTON, D. C.  
“February 19, 1908.

“MY DEAR MRS. BEALL:

“You have been exceedingly patient in not calling upon me for an earlier report respecting the matter of the Washington carriages. I conclude that you have believed that I was doing the best I could, and this has been the case. I could not touch the matter until the end of December and had then only a short time to give to it. At the first of this month I was able to take it up again, and from time to time to do something about it. I inclose herewith a survey of the evidence, of which I am also sending a copy to Mr. Dodge at Mt. Vernon. I likewise return your very interesting papers and all the various affidavits, letters and photographs which you handed to me in connection with the matter. I am obliged to you for smoothing my pathway by the collection of so much material, and am only sorry that it has not been possible to come to a conclusion more completely gratifying to Mr. Brownfield and to you.

“Believe me,

“Very truly yours,

“J. F. JAMESON.

“Mrs. Mary Stevens Beall.”



" CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON

" DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH  
 " J. FRANKLIN JAMESON  
 " Director

" WASHINGTON, D. C.  
 " *February 19, 1908.*

" DEAR MADAM:

" I have been asked to act as a referee with regard to two carriages for each of which the claim is made that it once belonged to General Washington. I owe to all who are interested an apology for having been so long in furnishing the following statement; but I must plead that I have many duties, am burdened heavily with my regular work, and can only devote small portions of time, separated sometimes by long intervals, to anything of this sort. I may also plead that I indicated beforehand that this would be the case. In studying the matter I have been much assisted by the evidences which you have been so kind as to bring forward; I have also been permitted by the kindness of Mr. Dodge to examine the papers that are preserved at Mt. Vernon; and I have, so far as my time permitted, made examination of such other materials as I thought likely to be useful.

" Of the two carriages in question, one is a coachee presented to the Mt. Vernon Ladies Association in 1894 by Mr. R. L. Brownfield, and now in a storage warehouse in Washington. The coach now at Mt. Vernon was presented in 1901. What I shall mainly do, in discussing them, is to comment on the value of the various evidences, considered from the point of view of one whose business it has been, in former times, to teach the principles of historical criticism, and always to practice them. I think that the clearest mode of procedure will be, first of all, to take up those data for which evidence of a conclusive or highly reliable character can be adduced and only later to discuss the less founded assertions made on behalf of one or the other of the carriages.

" It is clear from the evidences which you have accumulated that General Washington, first and last, possessed many different carriages. His own letters of 1780 to John Mitchell of Philadelphia show him obtaining at that time a coach, concerning which, however, there is no evidence to identify it with any of those of a later time.

“His letter to Lear, September 5, 1790, the letter of Daniel and Francis Clark, September 13, 1790, Washington’s letter to them of September 17, and Lear’s letter of October 24, 1790, quoted by you on pages 8–12 of your ‘Documentary History,’ show that Washington on going to Mt. Vernon had left a coach to be repaired by Clark. He calls it an old coach, and neither his letters nor those of the firm of Clark give any evidence that it was built by them. The letters show conclusively that the coach had paintings of the four seasons on the doors and front and back, *not* in the four quarter panels, and that there had been oval moldings in the latter panels. He ordered the four seasons to be continued in their existing places, and ordered that his crest should be painted in the ovals on the quarter panels. Some of these data are perhaps worth remembering. At all events, we are to attribute a much higher value to any of General Washington’s statements about his coaches than we can assign to most of the evidences which have been brought forward. It was presumably this coach which made with so great success the southern trip of 1791, as described in Custis’s ‘Recollections,’ page 424, though some of the details in that passage are imaginary.

“There seems to be indisputable evidence, pages 172 and 173 of your ‘Documentary History,’ that a coach of General Washington was offered for sale in Philadelphia in March, 1797, and that ‘one elegant Chariot and Coachee’ were offered for sale at Mt. Vernon in 1802, by his executors.

“We must accept as solid Bishop Meade’s statement in his ‘Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia,’ that a coach of General Washington’s fell into his hands about 1814 and was by him taken to pieces and dispersed. There is nothing to identify this coach with those previously mentioned.

“I think that we may also accept certain of the statements made by Watson in his ‘Annals of Philadelphia.’ He describes a coach with medallions of playing cupids on the panels, which he had known in Philadelphia as General Washington’s and which he saw in 1804 or 1805 in his own store-yard at New Orleans. Watson kept a store

in New Orleans from 1804 to 1806. He began to write his book in 1820 and this statement is in his first edition, that of 1830. His statement that it had been imported for Governor Richard Penn is not to be regarded, being hearsay. His statement in a footnote that the old coach stood between the combatants in the great battle of New Orleans and was riddled with shot, is to my mind worthless. At the time of the battle Watson was cashier in a bank in Germantown, and could not know this except on hearsay. It is just the sort of legendary statement which, as every student of history knows, would be likely to spring up in any such case. Any movable object known to have been in or near New Orleans in 1814 would be fabled to have had some sort of connection with the battle. The statement about the battle is not in the original edition of Watson but was subsequently inserted. While speaking of Watson, I may add that nothing which you have quoted from the third volume has any independent value.

“I may also remark that no pictures of General Washington’s coach have any value whatever. There is not the slightest evidence that any one of them was ever made in sight of a coach belonging to him. Mr. Fenn’s picture is proved by his own statement to be worthless. Lossing, in his book on Mount Vernon, page 234 or 235, pictures the General’s coach with a crest on the *doors*, not inclosed in ovals, and with the four seasons on the *quarter* panels. General Washington’s own statements show all this to be fanciful. Lossing also shows venetian blinds in the front of the coach, where the General’s own statements show him to have been determined to have glass; and I think he generally got what he wanted. While speaking of Lossing, I may add that he says in his first edition, ‘Clarke built the coach in England, came over with it and another precisely like it (which was imported by Mrs. Powel of Philadelphia), and settled in business in that city.’ In his edition of 1866 one can see that the text has been changed, by alterations of the stereotype plate, in such a manner as to omit the reference to Mrs. Powel and the statement that the coach was built in England.

"In Lossing's first edition he says that it was this English-built coach which was bought by Custis and passed from him to Bishop Meade. As he was writing fifty years later than the events, he may have had no basis whatever for this statement.

"On pages 35 and 36 of your "Documentary History" you cite a sworn statement, dated September 26, 1907, and made by a [grand] daughter of Henry Dunlap, Sr., coach builder of Philadelphia, to the effect that her [grand] father took to pieces for relics a coach which belonged to General Washington. As her [grand] father died in 1835 I lay no stress upon this statement, though without disputing that she believed it to be true. But there is in the National Museum a panel, painted apparently on copper, of an oval shape, representing three naked children gathering flowers, and this is labelled as having come from the family of Henry Dunlap. It came from the Patent Office in 1883, as you say. The old Patent Office label which is still upon it indicates it to have gone from the Dunlap family into the possession of John Garden, a collector who, I believe, had a sort of museum in Washington, and to have passed from his hands into the Patent Office. The label also declares that the panel was identified by Mr. Custis. There would appear to be pretty good evidence that in this we have a genuine portion of a Washington coach.

"Having perhaps somewhat cleared the ground by segregating the above and separately considering such trustworthy evidences as I have seen respecting real coaches of Washington, I shall proceed to discuss the coach now held at Mt. Vernon, bearing a discreet label which shows no more than that the carriage was exhibited at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876, as Washington's chariot. I do not suppose it to be necessary to go into a history of its possession since 1876. You seem abundantly to show by Michael Karam's statement of August 27, 1907, by Mrs. Gouverneur's of July 12 of that year, by the clause of Benjamin Richardson's will and by his letter of November 28, 1876, and that of S. F. Merrill dated November 27, 1876, that this coach is the one exhibited at Philadelphia, in the last-named year.

The letter of Mr. J. R. Houghton shows it to have been in the possession of William Dunlap of Philadelphia in 1872. A letter of Samuel W. Dewey of Philadelphia, dated December 24, 1859, preserved at Mt. Vernon, shows that William Dunlap had then had it in his custody for six years, and that Samuel Powel of Philadelphia was the owner. I can see no reason to doubt the statements made by Miss Mary Edith Powel in her letter of July 5, 1895, quoted by you, and those of Mr. Robert J. Hare Powel in his letter of November 14, 1900, to the effect that this coach was originally the property of Mrs. Elizabeth Powel of Philadelphia and not of General Washington. Since General Washington, in 1790, speaks of his coach as old, I do not put much faith in statements which imply that Washington and Mrs. Powel procured identical coaches at the same time, either from England or in America; for though they were in a sense neighbors in 1790, they were not in previous times.

“The copper medallion at the National Museum is an oval, about ten inches by eight. One of the holes by which it was fastened can be seen. The screws must have been large enough to make a considerable impression upon the doors, front and back, if the four medallions there placed were subsequently removed. But the coach at Mt. Vernon shows no traces of any such screw holes, nor of any oval moldings in the quarter panels. On the other hand, one can plainly see on the doors, in a strong light, the evidence that some painting of smaller size was once there.

“The only evidence to show that the coach now at Mt. Vernon was once the property of General Washington is the deposition of Elizabeth Steele, [*sic*] an ancient serving-woman, who testified in 1876 of matters relating to the period 1842–1850. No rules of historical evidence would permit one to attach serious value to her statements when contradictory to those made explicitly by members of the family in the letters referred to above. I should think that in connection with those letters there was some force in the presence of the name of George Heyberger, on the iron work of the seat, in connection with the statements about Mrs. Powel’s alterations of her vehicle, though I

will mention that there was a George Heyberger, [\*] blacksmith, in Philadelphia as early as 1800.

"All things considered, then, I am forced to conclude that there is no evidence that the coach now exhibited at Mt. Vernon was ever the property of General Washington. On the other hand, I am bound to say that I see no evidence that the coachee formerly presented by Mr. Brownfield has any connection with Washington, either. Mr. Brownfield's letter of May 9, 1907, preserved at Mt. Vernon, says that Forepaugh's widow assured him that the coach had been the General's, but that as her husband's papers had been destroyed by fire the proofs contained in them were lost. Such statements have no worth. In the narrative which you have sent me, the one typewritten on blue paper, I see that the coach has been traced back into the possession of a certain Roman Ketterer, who died in 1891. How long he had possession of it, is not shown. The only evidence which you adduce, toward bridging the long gap from 1802, when we know that the coachee belonging to Washington was offered for sale, to 1891, when we know that Roman Ketterer died possessed of a coachee, is the evidence of Mrs. Ann Reese, a lady of eighty-eight [*sic*] years, who testifies that previous to 1829 her brother had a coachee which had belonged to General Washington. The rules of historical evidence would forbid us to attach more than a very slight value to such recollections. Even if we considered them perfectly solid, we have still the gap from 1829 to 1891, toward bridging which you bring forward nothing but Mrs. Reese's identification of a photograph. Under such circumstances old ladies always identify old photographs; and most photographs of ancient coaches look very much alike.

"Accordingly, I am forced to conclude that we have no serious evidence to show that either of these carriages belonged to General Washington, while we also have much to show that the coach now at Mt. Vernon belonged instead to Mrs. Powel.

"Believe me, with high regard,

"Very truly yours,

"J. F. JAMESON.

"Mrs. Mary Stevens Beall."

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\* George H. Heyberger, the blacksmith, who died in 1822, was the father of George Heyberger, the coach spring maker, whose name appears in the Philadelphia directory from 1817 to 1825 inclusive.—M. S. BEALL.















